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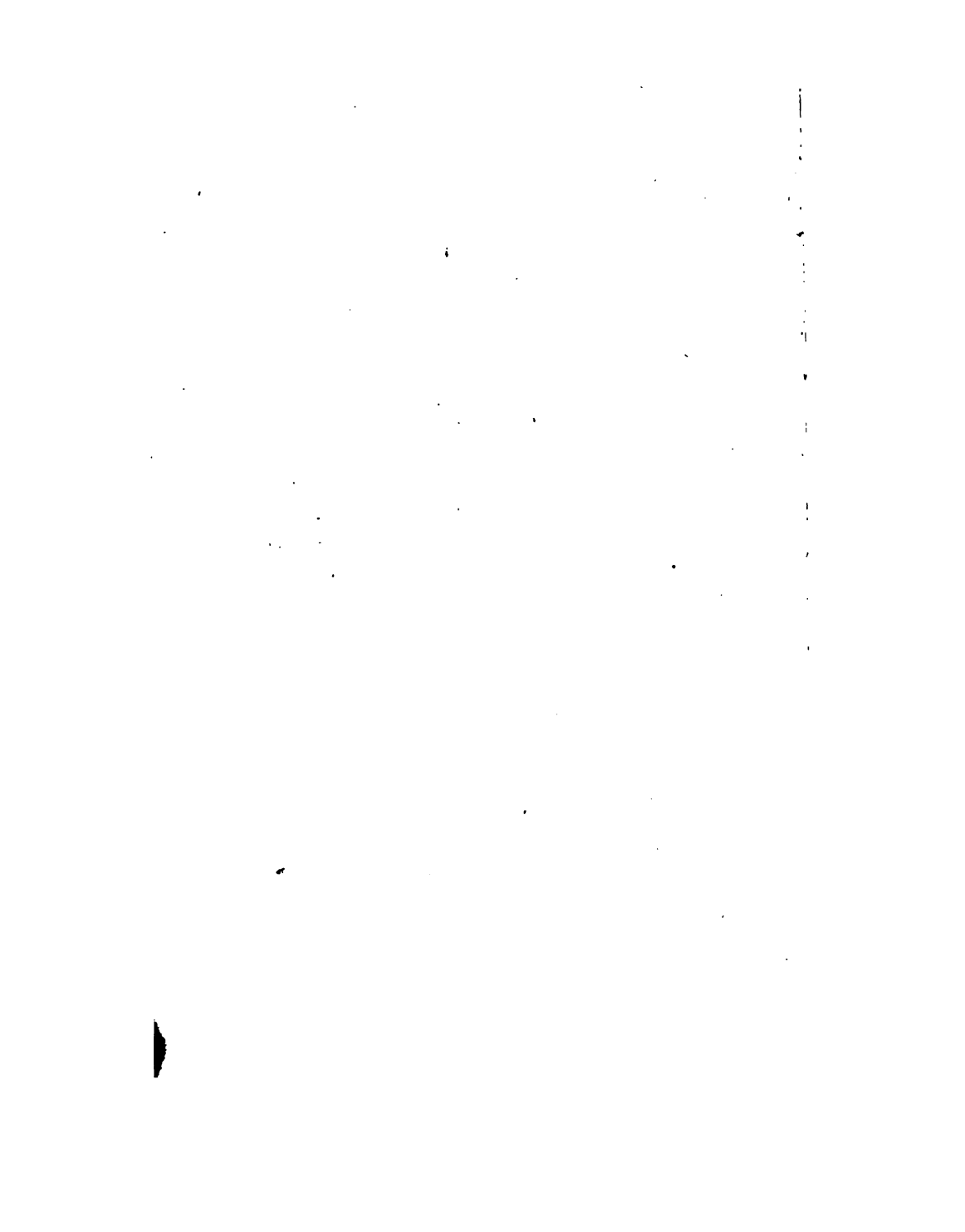
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F. C. Spencer.
1965

BORDER ESSAYS

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BY

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N O T E.

KNOWING that my Husband spoke at one time of recasting and reprinting these Essays, I give them now to the public exactly as they at first left his hand.

Messrs Blackwood, in whose Magazine they originally appeared, have kindly given their consent.

I have also to thank Messrs Longmans, Green, & Co. for permission to reprint the article on the Gladstones.

ELIZA H. VEITCH.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
THE VALE OF THE MANOR AND THE BLACK DWARF	1.
THE ORIGINAL BALLAD OF THE DOWIE DENS .	53
THE YARROW OF WORDSWORTH AND SCOTT .	81
YARROW AND ITS INSCRIBED STONE. . .	123
A DAY'S RAID INTO NORTHUMBERLAND . .	153
SIDE-LIGHTS ON THE <u>B</u> BATTLES OF PRESTON AND FALKIRK	185
MR GLADSTONE'S ANCESTORS	213

THE VALE OF THE MANOR AND
THE BLACK DWARF



THE VALE OF THE MANOR AND THE BLACK DWARF.

THE Vale of Manor from the point where the stream rises, some 2000 feet above sea-level, on the brow of Shielhope Head, in the heart of the Southern hills, to where it joins the Tweed, runs in the line of the old ice-flow from south-west to north-east, and is not more at its utmost than ten miles in length. Yet this vale in its short compass shows the varied elements of grandeur and beauty in a very rare degree. It impresses and subdues by mountain and crag; it touches eye and heart with a symmetry of opposing yet alternating and harmonious lines of hills, and a winsome grace peculiarly its own. In itself it is pro-

portioned, restrained, and complete as a Greek temple, supremely perfect and lovable; yet it adds to its apparent completeness a mysterious power of suggestion, through the grandeur of its head and its far-reaching Hopes and Glens, passing away up and into recesses beyond the vision, and here and there descried as terminated only in heights where the mountain-line bars the sky beyond. Around the source of the stream on the north side are the wild heights and the long, lonely, falling moorlands of the Dun Law and the Notman Law; while on the south are the steep ruddy scaurs of the Red Syke Head, ploughed deep by winter torrent, and chaotic from winter storm. Down to the base of those hills—some of them over 2500 feet—the far back glacier has worked and hollowed, with clean and delicate carving, an urn-like basin, extending in its opening to the north-east for fully a mile. Into this the stream descends, and through it flows, winding in sweet links, gurgling, and lapping the bared sides of the moraines which here dot the glen, and cleaving and revealing the roots of old and extinct forests. Nothing can be more perfect

in valley scenery than this—the Head of the Manor. The hill-line circles round the source of the infant stream—north, west, and south—complete in its symmetry of complementary and consenting heights, while their steep slopes, especially on the north and west, are smoothed as by a sculptor's hand. Long has the shaping Power unseen worked in the ages and through the winter nights; here at least stands its matchless product. And these steep hillsides are, in the summer time, clothed in the most delicate verdure, a pathetic monotone of short grass and fern, only varied here and there by the sombre grey of a jutting rock, or by the leaf-tracery and silver stem of a birk looking into the depth of a hidden cleugh, whence there falls softly on the ear the pulsing yet constant sounding of an unseen burn—the spirit-voice of the otherwise silent hills. Then, as we follow the main stream from its source through this urn-like basin, we are surprised by a sudden break in the symmetry of the opposing hills; for on the right the beetling rocks of the Bitch Crag (Biche Crag—Hind Crag) rise on the vision, standing out grey and grim against the sky-line, verdureless as an

alpine peak, and overhanging a deep short cleugh filled with the *débris* of ice-and-rain-split blocks of greywacke. These form a scene of perfect desolation, save where to the keen eye of the observer the sparse parsley fern clings lovingly to the irresponsive rock. A stream that had been buried under the shapeless *débris* suddenly emerges at the base of the cleugh into the light of heaven,—gleaming, spring-like, fetterless,—a joyous Naiad set free from the darkness of bondage.

Then on the left we have a glen—of long, steep, and rugged ascent—rising up to near the summit of the Dollar Law, 2680 feet above the sea. Down this rushes the Ugly—*i.e.*, fearsome—Grain (the old Scandinavian word for branch of burn)—and a grand burn it is,—two miles or more of leaps and falls and headlong plunge over boulder and between green and ferny banks: after two days' rain its right-hand branch is an almost continuous waterfall of 1000 feet. In summer this impetuous burn is charming, even amid its sternness and solitude; in late autumn and winter the mists and snows shroud its head and course, and the shepherd hears it tearing

down hidden in the darkness, or rushing beneath its ice-bound bridges. From this point for a mile the valley runs between steep hillsides, then gradually widens, still preserving its unique character of alternating hills sloping down on each side to the haugh, which is rich all along in greenery and wild flowers. The Water winds, pauses in pool, then rushes in stream, getting access of volume from its tributary burns, which it seems joyously to receive, and which inspire it with new life and speed. Linghope and Langha', Kirkhope, Posso, and Glenrath, are its main feeders, and each opens up a glen of special attractiveness. To the bare uplands of the higher valley succeed smiling corn-fields and graceful clumps of trees, especially in the middle and lower parts. Here and there alders and birks fringe the stream, and the tall yellow iris waves golden in the moist recesses of the haughs. Breaks of thyme make the braes purple and fragrant. The milkworts, pale and blue, nestle amid the short herbage; and the crowfoot symbolises the summer's golden prime. The Water turns and wheels in sheeny links, then nears its close, and passing by farmstead and cottage and


ruined tower, and rounding the green declivities of Cademuir, crowned with its prehistoric forts and stones, it rushes through the single arch of its high-backed bridge; and so beneath the birks and the hazels, which wave it a graceful departure, it is fused with the Tweed,—as a separate life in a wider, enlarging this, yet itself forgotten.

This valley, beautiful and secluded, did not lie in the main line of Border warfare and raid, as its neighbours across the hills which bound it, Yarrow and Ettrick. And it has not until recently been touched in song, though it stirred to musical verse the heart of Principal Shairp during his residence in it for some summer months. Yet it has much interesting legend and local story — of strong deeds, unearthly visions, and haunted houses, of hunting and hawking, and the Stewart kings, and Mary herself, which, however, cannot now be touched in detail. It is sufficient to say that in the early and middle ages, before and after the days of Robert Bruce, the Vale of Manor held at least nine, if not ten, Peel-towers, the residences of different families, — Corbett, Baddeby, Inglis, Lowes, Paterson, Baird, Veitch, Scott, and Bur-

nett. The representatives of those names, as far as they can be traced, are at this moment, with the single exception of the descendant through the female line of Baird of Posso, landless men. But there they were in this small and sequestered valley, the families living in those old towers as best they might, not badly off in the outings of the summer days, when the haughs were green and the heather on the hills, but huddled behind and within the stern thick walls during the nights and storms of winter. Strange and picturesque bits of legend and story cling to some of the names now mentioned, which we pass by, noting only that they recall the ever-living human emotions, circumstances warring with desire which makes fate, and that strange atmosphere of belief in supersensible powers which was so real in the life and character of those times. Some of the sires and sons went out from those old towers to fight and fall at Flodden and Pinkie. Others of them, even in the previous century, had found graves in northern France, at Beaugé and Verneuil. Most of them, countless generations of men and women, bright in their day of life, sleep under the green

mounds to be seen around the shapeless ruins of St Gordian's Kirk, far up the glen, their names unmarked, even their graves forgotten. Only a graceful cross set up recently on the site of the ancient church, by the late Sir John Naesmyth, a man of culture and true historic feeling, tells briefly and generally that the past generations of laird and lady and peasant lie there. All that remains is the pathetic charm for imagination of the old life and the old death.

Our great Master of Romance, who has touched Scottish story and scenery as no one else has done, once at least paid a visit to the Vale of Manor. Exactly ninety-three years ago Walter Scott saw the valley, apparently for the first and last time. His stay was a brief one, being but a guest for a day or two. But he saw it, and under, we may suppose, favouring circumstances,—it was the month of July. He has not, except in a very incidental way, reproduced the scenery, though he has noted features which are unmistakably characteristic of it. He could have known little or nothing of the legends and stories of the glen, otherwise they would not have been lost upon him. Upper Tweeddale



was not, indeed, his main sphere, either for scenery or story. But he found during his short visit to Manor one personage,—an oddity, —who touched his fancy, and whose memory remained with him, until nineteen years afterwards he reproduced the character, idealised after his peculiar fashion. This is Elshender the Recluse, as he appears in the novel of 'The Black Dwarf' (1816). It may be of some interest to set down what can be ascertained of the original of this character, and thus note the materials on which Scott worked in this case. 'The Black Dwarf,' indeed, is a novel in which the subordinate scenes, or scenes by the way, are the best, the plot as a whole being but second-rate. In those scenes the striking points have been suggested by the actual characteristics of the original,—the Black Dwarf of Manor. And I do not know any better illustration of the nearness to the actual facts of Scott's suggestiveness and idealising power than in the best parts of 'The Black Dwarf.'

The original of the Black Dwarf — David Ritchie—was buried in Manor kirkyard eighteen years before I was born, but I have heard my

mother speak of him, who had seen him, and had a curiously mixed feeling from the sight, chiefly gruesome. He used to hobble down to Peebles from his cottage in Manor, reaching it after hours of toil,—yet succeeding in getting back the same day,—a distance of fully eight miles. The bairns in the town used to bother him, my mother told me, and he grew very angry, and used strong expressions. “He would, if he could, poor seething lead down their throats,” and “he would cleave their harn-pans,” and so on, which he was mercifully not permitted to do. Yet she thought, as she always said, “There was good in the body; he was ill-used.” She was right, as I have since found, and “ill-used” is the key very much to the explanation of his highly peculiar character and development. He was in the habit of calling at my grandfather’s house, where he stayed an hour or two, and had dinner before returning to his cottage in Manor. In his curiously capricious mood he liked my grandfather, but hated my grandmother, who, I daresay, was rather repelled by him, and not sympathetic.

There is still another link in my memory with Bowed Davie. Well do I remember an elderly

woman,—a spinster,—who in her youth had been a servant at Hallmanor early in the century. This farm is about two miles up the valley from the Dwarf's cottage. "As I was aince," she said, "herdin' the kye near the hoose, I saw the tap of a lang stick coming up, as it were, ahint the dyke, and there was nae heid ava' and naebodie to be seen,—just aye a lang stick tooring ower the dyke,—an' I was feared. I was juist gaun to rin hame and leave the kye, when a wee bit bodie wi' the lang stick began to sprachle ower the dyke where some stanes were down, an' I thocht to mysel', this maun be Bowed Davie o' the Wudduss. Weel, I didna rin hame: he said naething as he gaed by me, but juist gied a queer kind o' glower. That nicht he stayed at Ha'manor, and odd, he was an awfu' bodie to crack—juist tellt ye stories ane after anither,—never was dune,—his tongue gaed like the clapper o' a mill. He stayed a nicht or twae, an' we were a' fond o' his cracks. He tellt us aboot the deid man wi' the glowerin' e'en—they were stellt in his heid—that they fand i' the water, and naebody kenned where he came frae; and he tellt us aboot witches and warlocks, and hoo he

had frightened away ghaists and robbers; and he said he didna care a bodle for a' the lasses in Manor, which I didna believe, but I thocht they wadna care muckle for him, and that was maybe the reason. I wadna hae putten my hand on his shoulder for a' the world. I wasna sorry when he gaed away ower to Glenrath." This is a very characteristic account of the impression made by David in his day.

"Black Dwarf." Why was this creature so named? Not, I think, entirely or mainly from his personal appearance, as is generally supposed. We had up to his time a popular belief in a creature that haunted our moors,—possibly a reminiscence of a prehistoric type of man. He was known to the ordinary mind of the time as "The Brown Man of the Moors," as "The Wee Brown Man,"—very much like that low thistle, with its red and then brown head (the *Carlina vulgaris*), which you find crowning the line of the brae against the sky as you toilsomely tramp up against and over recurring knowes that have a habit of constantly transcending each other, and facing you anew as if you had overcome none of them. Well, this Brown Man seems to have

passed latterly into a "Black Dwarf." Dwarf he was from the first, black or not. The Brown Man of the Moors was the lord of all the harmless creatures there,—deer, and peewit, and whaup, and grouse, and black game, and speeding mountain hare. They were his subjects, his creatures, and it was his duty and privilege to watch over them, guard them, protect them from intrusion and violent death. Hence he was at war with all huntsmen, and, as far as he could, revenged himself on them for intrusion on the silence of his domain and on injury to the helpless creatures of the wild. How I entirely sympathise with the heart of that old sprite! One can see his revenge on the sportsman in Leyden's "Cowl of Keeldar."

But he had another side, if indeed he was the same personage, which I rather think he was. He was also the Black Dwarf, and in this function he used to punish farmer and shepherd mankind by inflictions on their flocks—disease and death—either for injury done to his wild creatures, or as a power of providential retribution for the sins of the owners. When he showed himself, it was as a prophecy of evils coming on the land.

"My father," says the grand-dame of the Heugh-foot, "aften tauld me he was seen in the year o' the bloody fight at Marston Moor, and then again in Montrose's troubles, and again before the rout o' Dunbar, and in my ain time, he was seen about the time o' Bothwell Brigg, and they said the second-sighted Laird of Benarbuck had a communing wi' him some time afore Argyle's landing, but that I cannot speak to sae preceesely—it was far in the west. O, bairns, he's never permitted but in an ill time."¹

This being was thus both kind and retributive in his nature, if not somewhat malignant. His appearance on the moors corresponded very closely, almost literally, to the physical phenomenon known as David Ritchie, or Bowed Davie, and hence the application to him of the cognomen of the "Black Dwarf," which indicated a mixture of humanity and something of fiendish malevolence. This creature would have passed away, unnoticed and unknown to the general public, but for an accident.

In July 1797, Walter Scott, Captain John Scott his brother, and Adam Ferguson his friend, set out from Edinburgh to visit Cumberland and the English lakes. Scott was then twenty-six, a

¹ The Black Dwarf.

briefless advocate, known to a few people in Edinburgh as dabbling in German romantic ballads—the translator of “Lenore” and “The Wild Huntsman” of Bürger. As to how eventful this tour was to prove to him, Scott was as yet, of course, wholly unaware. He had been disappointed in his first love-passion the autumn preceding, and ere he returned from this journey he became engaged to Charlotte Margaret Carpenter, afterwards his wife. On their way they passed through Peebles, and visited, as a first stage from Edinburgh, Hallyards, three and a half miles from the former place, in the valley of the Manor. This house, the mansion formerly of the Lairds of Hundleshope, was tenanted by Adam Ferguson, known as Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh, and father of the younger Adam, Scott’s friend.

Adam Ferguson was a man of ability and worth,—had been in his younger days chaplain to the 42d Regiment, and was present at Fontenoy, where his military ardour, according to report, overcame his clerical decorum. He had been Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh, having resigned the chair in 1785,

when he was succeeded by Dugald Stewart. But the Professor had a great name in letters and philosophy in his day. He was author of an 'Essay on Civil Society' and of the 'History of the Roman Republic'—both works of merit for their time. His published lectures on moral philosophy are high-toned and eloquent. Ferguson, indeed, was a stoic in everything but temper. In this, if we may trust the anecdotes referring to the time of his sojourn at Hallyards and Neidpath, he was far from being impeccable. In fact, he might have been taken as the original of the story of the Scotch laird who once said to his servant John, who had complained of his temper: "I am sure, John, it is nae suner on than it's off." "Ay," said John; "but, laird, it's nae suner off than it's on." The Professor, nevertheless, was a worthy, genial, hospitable man, and for long very kindly remembered on Tweedside.

About half a mile west from Hallyards, up the valley and across what was then chiefly low-lying haugh and moorland—Scott calls it "wild moorland"—there lived in a cottage built by his own hands a queer creature, by name David Ritchie, but commonly known in the district as "Bowed Davie," and by those kindly dis-

posed to and familiar with him as simply "Davie" or "Dauvit." He was oddly misshapen, short in stature—not more than three feet six inches in height—and he was certainly not comely to look upon. I have before me three sketches of him—1817, 1820, and the photograph of one probably earlier than either of these, a drawing in the possession of the late Mr Ballantine of Woodhouse. The first two are obviously sketches from memory, the third may have been taken from life. It is the rudest and certainly the most repellent. These agree essentially in feature. In all he wears a cowl or night-cap, and carries a long pole—*kent*, or sort of alpenstock. He is dressed in hodden grey, and wears a plaid thrown across his shoulders. The sketches bear out in general the following description, given to Dr John Brown by a friend of mine, on whose intelligence and accuracy in gathering information full reliance may be placed—the late Mr Robert Craig, surgeon in Peebles: "His forehead was very narrow and low, sloping upwards and backwards—something of the hatchet shape; his eyes deep-set, small, and piercing; his nose straight, thin as the end of a cut of cheese, sharp at the point, nearly touching his fearfully pro-

jecting chin; and his mouth formed nearly a straight line; his shoulders rather high, but his body otherwise the size of ordinary men; his arms were remarkably strong.”¹ His legs were very short, and dreadfully deformed. Mungo Park, then a surgeon in Peebles, who attended him on one occasion, compared them to a pair of cork-screws. “The principal turn they took was from the knee outwards, so that he rested on his inner ankles and the lower part of his tibiae. . . . The *thrown* twisted limbs must have crossed each other at the knees.”²

But nothing can be better than Scott’s own description of this creature. I do not think that in any essential particular it departs from literal accuracy. This is how he appeared at his work of building his cottage on Mucklestone Moor to Earnscliff and Hobbie Elliot, as the form was revealed to them in the early dawn:—

His head was of uncommon size, covered with a fell of shaggy hair, partly grizzled with age; his eyebrows, shaggy and prominent, overhung a pair of small, dark, piercing eyes, set far back in their sockets. . . . The rest of his features were of the coarse, rough-hewn stamp, with which a painter

¹ Letter in ‘*Horæ Subsecivæ*,’ p. 417.

² *Ibid.*

would equip a giant in romance; to which was added the wild, irregular, and peculiar expression, so often seen in the countenances of those whose persons are deformed. His body, thick and square, like that of a man of middle size, was mounted upon two large feet; but nature seemed to have forgotten the legs and the thighs, or they were so very short as to be hidden by the dress which he wore. His arms were long and brawny, furnished with two muscular hands, and, where uncovered in the eagerness of his labour, were shagged with coarse black hair. It seemed as if nature had originally intended the separate parts of his body to be the members of a giant, but had afterwards capriciously assigned them to the person of a dwarf, so ill did the length of his arms and the iron strength of his frame correspond with the shortness of his stature.¹

David Ritchie never wore shoes,—the extremities of his legs being wrapped in rags and old stockings, with the toes always exposed, according to Mr Craig's account, summer and winter. There are wonderful stories of his strength of arm and power of butting with his skull. He is said to have been able to break, with a rush and stroke of his head, the single-panelled doors of the shepherds' houses!

¹ Tales of my Landlord : The Black Dwarf, chap. iv.

His mode of locomotion was remarkable. He placed his long pole or *kent* in front of him,—rested his hands on its turned top,—“lifted one leg something in the manner that the oar of a boat is worked, and then the other, next advanced his staff, and repeated the operation, by diligently doing which he was able to make not very slow progress. He frequently walked to Peebles, four miles, and back again in one day.”¹

This misshapen creature had set himself down in Manor,—an especial incongruity in such a valley; but there he figured for at least half a century, finally died there,—getting an immortality of memory such as none of his contemporaries in the district will ever possess. And if he was physically peculiar, he was as eccentric in habits, tastes, and temper,—misanthropical, jealous, irritable, and revengeful, yet with a curious fusion of better and really rare qualities. To some of the people around him he was the subject of ridicule and practical joking; in the minds of others he excited a certain weird dread as somewhat uncanny,—

¹ Mr Craig's Letter, p. 418.

not without a touch of warlock power readily believed in at that time. By the farmers and resident lairds of the district, to whom he paid annual visits, he was kindly treated; and he would condescend to accept small sums of money, and gifts of domestic supply, provided they were not quite of the kind given to the ordinary mendicant. He took sixpences, but hated to keep them, always turning them, when amassed, into shillings and half-crowns, which he carefully hoarded. He was not profuse in his thanks,—rather took what was given him as his due.

On an evening after Scott's arrival at Hall-yards, it was proposed by his host that Scott and he should pay a visit to the cottage of the Dwarf, situated at the base of the eastern slope of the Woodhouse Hill—"Wudduss" they called it in those days. We can fancy the interest of the prospect of such a visit to Scott, on whose imagination the old world was hovering as a shapeless but stirring moving dream. We can picture the two—the venerable Professor with his slim erect figure and flowing hair, and the young advocate, with his limping gait—making their way across the low-lying haughs by the stream

in the quiet of the summer evening,—to be afterwards famous as “Mucklestane Moor.”

Once within the cottage the interview is well told in these words:—

At the first sight of Scott, the misanthrope seemed oppressed with a sentiment of extraordinary interest, which was either owing to the lameness of the stranger, —a circumstance throwing a narrower gulf between him and most other men,—or to some perception of an extraordinary mental character in this limping youth, which was then hid from other eyes. After grinning upon him for a moment with a smile less bitter than his wont, the Dwarf passed to the door, double-locked it, and then coming up to the stranger, seized him by the wrist with one of his iron hands, and said: “Man, hae ye ony poo’er?” By this he meant magical power, to which he had himself some vague pretensions, or which, at least, he had studied and reflected upon till it had become with him a kind of monomania. Scott disavowed the possession of any gifts of that kind, evidently to the great disappointment of the inquirer, who then turned round and gave a signal to a huge black cat, hitherto unobserved, which immediately jumped up to a shelf, where it perched itself, and seemed to the excited senses of the visitors as if it had really been the familiar spirit of the mansion. “He has poo’er,” said the Dwarf, in a voice which made the flesh of the hearers thrill; and Scott, in particular, looked as

if he conceived himself to have actually got into the den of one of those magicians with whom his studies had rendered him familiar. "Ay, *he* has poo'er," repeated the Recluse; and then, going to his usual seat, he sat for some minutes grinning horribly, as if enjoying the impression he had made, while not a word escaped from any of the party. Mr Ferguson at length plucked up his spirits, and called to David to open the door, as they must now be going. The Dwarf slowly obeyed, and when they had got out, Mr Ferguson observed that his friend was as pale as ashes, while his person was agitated in every limb.¹

The picture of "Elshender the Recluse," nineteen years afterwards, testifies to the strength and permanency of the impression made in the lonely cottage on the young imagination of the future Master of Romance; and it testifies not less to the accuracy of his memory. There is hardly a trait in the character of the Black Dwarf of the novel which had not its counterpart in the original—always excepting, of course, the concealed quality of the Recluse as a personage of birth and fortune, and the motive of his withdrawal from the world as disappointment in love. Among other points, this very scene is re-

¹ Chambers's History of Peeblesshire, pp. 403, 404.

produced by Scott, along with an almost literally accurate description of the interior of the cottage. The only difference is that Isabella Vere, and not Scott himself, is the person who has been admitted at night to the dwelling, when seeking the Dwarf's help against her forced marriage with the scheming and brutal Sir Frederick Langley.

The door opened [we are told], and the Solitary stood before her, his uncouth form and features illuminated by the iron lamp which he held in his hand. . . . She entered. . . . The Recluse's first act, after setting the lamp upon the table, was to replace the numerous bolts which secured the door of his hut. She shrunk as she heard the noise which accompanied this ominous operation. . . . The light of the lamp was weak and uncertain; but the Solitary, without taking immediate notice of Isabella, otherwise than by motioning her to sit down on a small settle beside the fireplace, made haste to kindle some dry furze, which presently cast a blaze through the cottage. Wooden shelves, which bore a few books, some bundles of dried herbs, and one or two wooden cups and platters, were on one side of the fire; on the other were placed some ordinary tools of field-labour, mingled with those used by mechanics. Where the bed should have been, there was a wooden frame, strewed with withered moss and rushes, the couch of the ascetic. The whole space of the cottage did not

exceed ten feet by six within the walls ; and its only furniture, besides what we have mentioned, was a table and two stools formed of rough deals.

The first part of this is a picture in words, after the best manner of Rembrandt ; the latter is a literal representation after Teniers or Gerard Dow.

When Scott thus first saw the Black Dwarf, the latter would be fifty-five or fifty-six years of age. He was born at Easter Haprew, in the adjoining parish of Stobo, in 1740 or 1741. His father, William Ritchie, was a labouring man, working in the slate-quarry there ; his mother was a weakly rheumatic woman, — Annabel Niven. Hence, probably, curiously enough, the Annale of the novel as the name of the nurse in the family of the Heugh-foot. He was doubtless born deformed, but the poverty of his early surroundings and lack of motherly care unquestionably contributed to intensify the oddity of the misshapen creature. If David, the boy, attended school at all, it was only for a few months, his father and mother dying while he was very young. He learned to read, but it is doubtful if he could write. As a youngster he did some

easy work at Broughton Mill, and then at Lyne's Mill,—steering around husks that were used for drying the corn. This the creature could do sitting, and well from his strength of arm. He used to refer to this occupation in after-life with great complacency. He was sent from Lyne to Edinburgh, where he was apprenticed to a brush-maker. Here he learned nothing apparently, and the ridicule and persecutions of the street boys were intolerable to him. Mortified and irritated by jeering and insult, the poor creature found his way back to Peeblesshire, and took up his abode in Manor. Why he abandoned Stobo, his birth-place, is not clear, unless it was that the extremely secluded situation of Manor, in those days especially, attracted him, as a hunted animal might flee to the farthest wild under a sense of the presence of its persecutors. Here the first notice of him as receiving assistance from the poor's fund is in 1762. He was now probably twenty-one or twenty-two years of age. Here he lived until his death in 1811. His actions and manner of life in Manor showed his originality and eccentricity. Without apparently, in the first instance, asking any permission from the

owner of the estate of Woodhouse, Sir James Naesmyth of Posso, he fixed on a spot for the erection of a cottage at the base of the Woodhouse Hill, some two and a half miles up the Manor valley. This he proceeded to build of alternate layers of turf and stones, with his own hands. The kindly laird, when he heard of the circumstance, freely gave the eccentric creature the bit of land he had set his mind on. Not content with a cottage, David proceeded on the strength of this privilege to mark out an adjoining space for a garden, and surrounded it by a wall of large stones. In laying the largest of these, he had occasional help from a passing shepherd, but the design and work were practically his own. This choice of a site was, I have no doubt, determined partly by the fact that the remains of the Peel-tower of Old Woodhouse, as it was called, were close at hand, a few yards to the south-east of the site of the cottage,—still marked by one or two graceful ash-trees. Here the stones of the old building were readily available, quarried to hand. The turf he could dig, in his usual way, by pressing the head of the spade against his breast; the

stones he could pull down and carry or roll—nobody cared for old towers in those days. The garden wall of the Recluse shows even now evidence of the origin of the stones. Several of them still retain the hard mortar of the old tower walls,—and the stones at the bottom of this wall are obviously the foundation-stones of the ancient building. It was in this his original dwelling that Scott visited the Black Dwarf.

David lived in this cottage of his own handiwork until 1802, when Sir James Naesmyth kindly replaced it by one built of stone and lime, with thatch roof. This now stands, but, unfortunately, modernised as to roof—slated, in fact—with another cottage tacked on to the west. But we have still preserved the low doorway through which the Dwarf entered, under the lintel of which he was able to stand upright. Scott says the height of this doorway was 3 feet 6 inches, and infers that the height of David was less than this. But the truth is, the height of the doorway is exactly 3 feet 10 inches, and thus the Dwarf standing under it is no sufficient ground for this conclusion regarding his stature.

We have also the small window or bole in the wall, on the west side of the doorway, fitted with wooden shutters, hung originally on leather hinges, now on iron. It is, as from the first, without glass, which David would not have on any account. This is 1 foot 4 inches in height, and 1 foot 5 inches in breadth. Through this bole he was in the habit of reconnoitring visitors. Scott did not fail to note this circumstance. He speaks in the novel of "the very small window, resembling an arrow-slit, which he had constructed near the door of his dwelling, and through which he could see any one who approached it, without possibility of their looking in upon him." There is also a small opening in the north wall of the cottage, circular on the outside, which might have served as a gunshot hole. Its breadth inside is 1 foot 3 inches. There is a small window in this north wall, 2 feet in height by 1 foot 6 inches in breadth—but this, I suspect, is modern. The height of the south or front wall of the cottage is 8 feet 6 inches; the breadth 11 feet. Inside, the length of the area is 14 feet 10 inches; the breadth 7 feet 10 inches. The height of the roof is 7 feet 10

inches. His sister, who by this time had come to live with him, or rather alongside of him—for that was all he would tolerate—had an apartment with separate door under the same roof, but divided by a walled partition from the brother's chamber. In the front of the cottage is a small clear stream, which comes from the heights of the Woodhouse Hill.

During the half-century of David Ritchie's residence in Manor, he subsisted on a moderate allowance from the poor's fund of the parish, on alms in the shape of money and provisions, and on the small sums he raised from the sale of honey from the bee-skeps he kept in his garden. His meal-pock hung in the Kirkton Mill, and it was expected that each person who had a melder ground there should contribute to it a *gowpen* (handful). Then he made annual peregrinations round the parish, visiting farm and mansion-house alike, where he was usually hospitably received, and where his cracks by the kitchen-fire, in his shrill screeching voice, of the gods and goddesses of the old mythology, stories from Scottish history, especially of Wallace and Bruce, ghosts, fairies, robbers, and val-

orous incidents in his own career of conflicts with powers human and supernatural, when his imagination would occasionally transcend the actual,—entertained the amused and awed but not always credulous rustics. From these visits he usually returned laden with *provants* (provisions) of various sorts. His name is found, as I have said, on the kirk-session roll as receiving aid for the first time in 1762—about the date of his taking up his abode in Manor. From February 28 of that year down to August 28, 1811, the written record of him is simply that of a pauper receiving his alms. The first notice is, "To David Ritchie for cloth, £3, 12s. 0d." I should fancy this must have been Scots money—yet subsequent allowances could hardly be so reckoned, they are generally so small in amount. He got nothing more until January 1, 1764, when the sum of 5s. is doled out to him. In 1767, September 13, he again gets £3 for "cloathes." The first suit must have been a durable one. In 1769 he and James Cairns get a plaid apiece, which together cost £5, 8s. 0d. After this date he gets once, generally twice a-year, 5s., 2s. 6d.; then as the years go on,

10s., 15s., then £1, and he has an occasional allowance for a suit of clothes. This support continues until the end came in 1811. He died in December of that year. Meanwhile, apparently in January 1790, his sister Agnes Ritchie had joined him in his residence in Manor, and she, too, became an object of parochial relief down to her death in 1821. We find under December 7 of that year, "A coffin for the deceased Agnes Ritchie, £1," and "for bread to persons at her death, £0, 0s. 8d."

Notwithstanding this mode of sustenance, David had accumulated at his death upwards of £20 in money. He had £4, 2s. of gold in one bag, and £7, 18s. in shillings and half-crowns in another. The remainder was made up of a receipt for a loan which he had given. After his death there is the following entry in the session records: "1812, December 5th.—Received from Mr James Brown, weaver in Peebles, £10, 10s. 8d., being money belonging to the late David Ritchie, Woodhouse, and including six months' interest." In his journeys to Peebles he had become acquainted with James Brown, a worthy and "bieny" burgess of the town, had trusted him

with the money, thinking it safer perhaps in his keeping than in the stocking in his lonely cottage; and his trust, looking to the punctual interest, had not been misplaced. Of an old and respectable stock was James Brown—bonnet-lairds. It was his brother William, a mason and contractor, who, going through a chance contract to the neighbourhood of Ecclefechan about the last quarter of last century, found Thomas Carlyle's father and uncles hodmen and poachers, took them up, and trained them to the respectable trade of building. But we have not completed the significant notice of December 1812. It is added, "Agnes Ritchie, his sister, requested the said money to be returned to the poor's fund." Well done, half-witted, poverty-stricken Agnes!

Characteristic traits of David Ritchie turn up all through the novel of the 'Black Dwarf,' with wonderful faithfulness to the original. To his observation of the character of David of Manor, Scott is no doubt greatly indebted for the suggestions he has worked up into the best parts of the romance. It is one of those novels in which, as I have said, the main merit does not lie in the plot, but in the side-scenes, or episodes,—and for hints

of these the author owes much to this misshapen creature and his ways.

Scott makes much of Elshie's strength in setting huge stone upon stone, as David Ritchie did. This feature impressed Hobbie Elliot with a belief in Elshie's supernatural power, and also that he was assisted by that mysterious familiar who was descried from the hills around as often in company with him. This appearance could not be his shadow, as was suggested to Hobbie, for, as the latter argued, how could his shadow be between the Dwarf and the sun? And then this personage at once disappeared on the near approach of the wayfarer, like a phantom flitting from human presence.

Then we have this:—

Though ye may think him a lamiter [says Hobbie Elliot of the Heugh-foot], yet, grippie for grippie, friend, I'll wad a wether he'll make the blude spin frae under your nails. He's a teugh carle, Elshie! he grips like a smith's vice.

One story of his strength is worth quoting:—

Near his cottage there were some large trees to be dug up, one of which occupied two men for two days constant picking and undermining. The Dwarf

happening to pass by, saw and taunted them with their weakness, telling them with his usual acrimony, "that he would do in two minutes what had ta'en siccan twae whaesel-blawn creatures twae days to do without effect." Then setting his bull-like head and shoulders to the bottom of the tree, he gave it a push of so tremendous a force as fairly rooted it up from the foundation, to the astonishment of the men, who stared, thinking he was possessed of the powers of a giant. Davie marched off with all the dignity of having done a great action, muttering: "Brush o' Babel! do that an' ye can."¹

When Earnscliff and Hobbie Elliot volunteered to assist the Recluse in raising some of the larger stones in the building of the cottage, we have his contempt for ordinary capacity reproduced:—

Elliot and Earnscliff placed the stone, by their joint efforts, upon the rising wall. The Dwarf watched them with the eye of a taskmaster, and testified, by peevish gestures, his impatience at the time which they took in adjusting the stone. He pointed to another—they raised it also; to a third, to a fourth—they continued to humour him, though with some trouble, for he assigned them, as if intentionally, the heaviest fragments which lay near. "And now, friend," said Elliot, as the unreasonable Dwarf indi-

¹ Chambers, *Life*, pp. 34, 35.

cated another stone larger than any they had moved, "Earnscliff may do as he likes; but be ye man or be ye waur, deil be in my fingers if I break my back wi' heaving thae stanes ony langer like a barrow-man, without getting sae muckle as thanks for my pains."

David Ritchie is usually described as misanthropical, suspicious of insult, irritable, persistent in purpose, especially revenge. Scott has emphasised his misanthropy, though not without relief, and in this he is true to the original. I do not suppose that David of Manor was well disposed to the world in general; and considering his original deformity—the idea of which haunted him like a phantom—and the jeering and insult he had experienced on account of it, a certain bitter and misanthropical tone of mind was not unlikely to be the result. But from all I can learn of him, it seems to me that this and some of the other defects mentioned have been considerably exaggerated. Miss Ballantyne of Woodhouse, who knew him well, and was one of his best friends, said that he was not ill-tempered, but, on the contrary, kind, especially to children.¹ This is quite opposed to statements of Mr W. Cham-

¹ Mr Craig's Letter, p. 425.

bers, and probably true—though he no doubt hated street boys, or *keelies*, as he called them, who jeered at and persecuted him. The expressions used by David under the practical jokes and insults of his persecutors show a mixture of Byronic wrath and Carlylean energy of expression. In judging them, we must keep in mind the circumstances under which the sayings were said, and the sharp stroke of words given back. Intense and repulsive even as are the expressions of misanthropy and denunciation which Scott puts into the mouth of Elshie, these might be paralleled by phrases actually used by the original, under provocation. And some of his threats, when in a boasting mood, were sufficiently picturesque and dramatic—as, for example, when he valorously declared he would make an end of a ghost (!) that troubled a farmhouse: “I’s cow him, I trow. I’s weize a brace o’ bullets through him; and if I canna do that, I’ll run him through with a hay-fork”—two finely exhaustive alternatives for the ghost.

As the result in one instance, however, turned out, there was a third course, which ended in David’s overthrow by the rebound of the gun,

which had been secretly double-loaded for the occasion. He accounted for this lack of victory, and sustained his self-complacency, by maintaining that the "slugs had rebounded from the worm-eaten ribs of the accursed worricow"!

David's relations with his sister were not cordial. When Sir James Naesmyth built the cottage for him in 1802, David insisted on there being two entrance-doors, with a partition between the two apartments. The one doorway, 3 feet 10 inches in height, opened on David's apartment, and was used by him; the other, or taller doorway, led to the sister's division of the cottage. The sister is reputed to have been of somewhat weak intellect, though by no means imbecile. On one occasion, when she had been ill for some time, Miss Ballantyne of Woodhouse asked David how she was. The reply was that he had not been in "to speer" (ask) that morning; but he added that he "hated folks that were aye gaun to dee and didna do't"—showing a regard for the strict order of things somewhat peculiar and inhuman.

Of his doggedness in purpose, the following illustration is picturesque and weird:—

He had applied to Mr Laidlaw of Hallyards for the branch of a tree, which grew in the neighbourhood, to serve some purpose of his own. Mr Laidlaw was always very ready to oblige Davie, but told him that on the present occasion he could not grant his request, as it would injure the tree. Davie made no reply, but went away grumbling to himself. Next morning some of Mr Laidlaw's servants happened to be going from home as early as two o'clock, when, to their surprise and terror, they perceived through the grey twilight a strange figure struggling and dancing in the air below the said tree. When going up to the place, they found it was Davie, who had contrived by some means to fasten a rope to the branch he wanted, and was swinging with all his weight upon it to break it down. They left him, and before he was again disturbed, he succeeded in bringing it to the ground, and carried it home with him.¹

Scott makes his Recluse retire to the wilds of Mucklestane Moor through disappointment in love. Nothing in the original personage corresponds to this, unless it be one somewhat amusing episode in his career. When well on in manhood, he set himself to get some one to marry him—probably in reply to some taunt as to his unacceptableness to the sex. He got the consent of a “haverel wench,” and went to the

¹ Life, by W. Chambers, pp. 30, 31.

minister, who, however, persistently declined to tie the knot matrimonial; whereupon the crooked body departed in great wrath, uttering a direful threat as to the certain pernicious effect of this refusal on the morals of the parish!

In the opinion of Professor Adam Ferguson, who knew him intimately and befriended him, David Ritchie was "a man of a powerful capacity and original ideas, but whose mind was thrown off its just balance by a predominant degree of self-love and self-opinion, galled by the sense of ridicule and contempt."¹ David certainly possessed memory, sensibility, and imagination beyond the common. Though little, if at all, at school, he could read English well. He was especially fond of Shenstone's Pastorals. Many of these he had by heart, and he was in the habit of repeating them at the hospitable ingle where for a time he happened to sojourn. We can quite understand how the Solitary, in his lonely cottage by the Manor, around which he had created a little paradise of flowers and murmuring bees, would rejoice in Shenstone. He was fond also of Allan Ramsay, though, oddly enough,

¹ Introduction to 'Black Dwarf.'

as we are told, he hated Burns. He had read the 'Paradise Lost,' and liked the descriptive passages. Scott tells us he has heard him, in his most unmusical voice, repeat the description of Paradise, which he seemed fully to appreciate. He was a close student of Tooke's 'Panthæon,' whence he drew copiously the legends of classical mythology. His head was stored with the popular stories about Wallace and Bruce, and Scottish heroes generally. It is probable that he was indebted to Professor Ferguson, who, we know, occasionally lent him books, for some of these volumes. Those authors supplied materials for his memory and imagination to work upon—faculties which were both active; and we can thus understand how one so stored in knowledge and myth above the peasants around him was an acceptable retailer of old-world stories at smithy and mill and fireside through the valley—in fact, rather an educative influence in this remote district at the time.

His misanthropy was modified by a kindliness to children—if very young; brats who mocked him he of course hated. He had a cat and dog of which he was very fond. His love of flowers

and gardening was intense. The culture of his garden was indeed the main occupation of his life in spring and summer. He had formed it himself, dug and walled it with incredible labour. He had managed to collect flowers, fruit-trees, kitchen vegetables, and certain medicinal herbs known to the popular Scottish pharmacopœia. These he dried and dispensed to those who sought them. He planted willows and rowan-trees. The rowan was his prophylactic against witches, whom he dreaded greatly. He stocked the place with bee-hives, until the garden became a model spot, quite unapproached by the plots of the peasantry of the district, whose highest ambition was cabbages. The hermit's garden thus grew to be the wonder of the country-side. It was the main delight and solace of his solitary life, and it pleased him greatly to show it to visitors, jealous and exacting as he was in regard to intercourse with strangers. Deep down in the heart of the misanthrope thus lay the love of flowers and animals. Again this trait turns up in the novel.

How touchingly is this put!—

Next morning the heath was in its thickest and

deepest bloom. The bees, which the Solitary had added to his rural establishment, were abroad and on the wing, and filled the air with the murmurs of their industry. As the old man crept out of his little hut, his two she-goats came to meet him, and licked his hands in gratitude for the vegetables with which he supplied them from his garden. "You, at least," he said, "see no difference in form which can alter your feelings to a benefactor. . . . While I was in the world, did I ever meet with such a return of gratitude?"¹

One use he made of his flowers was peculiar. He had a liking for good-looking damsels as well as fine flowers. And, curiously, he was reputed a judge of good looks in the other sex. The lasses of Manor seem to have believed in him, at least to this extent. It was their custom, according to report, to present themselves at the bole of the Dwarf's cottage for judgment on their charms. He would, when a damsel appeared, eye her through the opening in the wall. If he did not think her worthy of a grade of honour, he would slam the small wooden shutters, and retire within the recesses of his den in disgust at such an appeal. If he did think her worthy, or was attracted by the vision, he would

¹ The Black Dwarf.

beckon her to the garden, and there, without comment, present her with a flower known in his floral language of degrees to indicate a particular class of beauty,—either a simple pass or honours.

But besides his love of cultivated flowers and gardening, it is clear from very good evidence that this deformed creature was an intense and disinterested lover of wild nature. And this was, if not the original motive for his choice of the Vale of Manor as a dwelling-place, yet in all probability one of the reasons why he clung so fondly to it all his life. In this there was some compensation for the ridicule of the world. The hills and streams he loved did not mock him, and he found that "Nature never did betray the heart that loved her." Besides his garden being his pride and delight, we are told that he was "an admirer of more natural beauty: the soft sweep of the green hill, the bubbling of a clear fountain, or the complexities of a wild thicket, were scenes on which he often gazed for hours, and, as he said, with inexpressible delight."¹

¹ Introduction to 'Black Dwarf.'

Davie, like all nature lovers, was fond of solitude, and when his garden did not require his care, and he was not out on some perambulation among the farmers or lairds, he would lie the long summer day by a well-spring, simply poring over the waters. Could the most disinterested lover of nature do more? Perhaps — likely, indeed — one of his favourite spots among the springs was the Well-Bush, nearly opposite his cottage, on the south side of the Manor Water. There, at this well-spring, surrounded by its fine and aged trees, the green-sward beneath them flecked in gleam and shade, and the head of the spring itself crowned by one solitary fern, we can conceive the deformed creature to have lain and dreamed and passed the summer day. After all, if he had soul to enjoy this, in forgetfulness of the world and its taunts, he was happy and rich indeed.

Then the imaginative nature of the creature is shown through the popular tradition about him that he was in the habit of wandering out in the night along the dusky roads alone, probably feeling that wind, moon or stars, darkness or gleam, had no jeering voice. And on

those occasions he would resort to old ruins, of peel-tower or kirk, that had come down from the past with a hold on the imagination and emotions. This uncouth figure, in, for example, the old Peel-tower of Castle-hill of Manor of a night, crouched in a corner of one of those low-arched vaults, watching eagerly the moon-beams glancing through the old narrow splayed boles, is an imagination as gruesome as can well be realised; yet the circumstance was likely enough to occur any time between 1762 and 1811.

Scott had known this trait in his character, when he introduced the picture of him as he appears to Earnscliff and Hobbie Elliot, in the gloaming on Mucklestane Moor, moving silently and weirdlike amid the grey stones there, with the story of the petrified hag attaching to them, and amid all the supernatural associations of that lonely and eerie waste.

He went little to church, possibly from the dread of observation and remark; but he was supposed to have peculiar notions on religious subjects. I am inclined to think that he was theistic rather than Christian in his belief. But

“he would now and then speak concerning a future state with great earnestness and good sense; and on such occasions, when his feelings were excited, would sometimes burst into tears.”¹

As in life, so in death, he had a dread of association with his fellows. Sir James Naesmyth of Posso had been his friend from the first, when as an insulted and soured lad he fled from the streets of Edinburgh, and had, as we have seen, first given him a free site, and then provided a cottage for him to live in. Now when David was getting old, a view about his burial-place occurred to him. The predominating feeling of his life asserted itself. “I dinna want,” he said, “to be buried among the common brush in Manor kirkyaird.” His desire was that his remains should lie on the summit of the Woodhill,—Woden’s Hill, probably,—an isolated green sloping mount, crowned with an old fort and stones, standing in the middle of the valley, a central point between Posso and Glenrath, and blown upon by all the winds of heaven. Sir James Naesmyth, who had promised that his desire should be respected, was,

¹ Edinburgh or Scots Magazine, 1817, p. 211.

however, abroad at the time of his death—in Vienna. David was thus buried in the ordinary way in Manor kirkyard. There he now lies, or at least there rests as much as has been left of his remains, with a tombstone at the head, set up by the Messrs Chambers, and a rowan shading his grave—at this moment, however, only the fragment of what it was. Thus the Woodhill of Manor did not get the keeping of David, which it appropriately should have had, for so it would have added to its traditional castle of Macbeth, really Malbeth, and its weird associations, all those memories that would have haunted the tomb of the Black Dwarf.

It is rather sad to have to record that on his sister's death and burial in 1821, the bones of the brother in the grave adjoining were taken up and sent to Glasgow. It is not clear from the narrative I have heard whether all were removed. Certainly the bones of the legs were, and the skull. The latter is said to have been replaced, but not the former. David knew by heart the lines attributed to Shakespeare regarding his remains, and was fond of repeat-

ing them, and wished them engraven on his tomb:—

“Good friend ! for Jesus’ sake forbear
To dig the dust enclosed here :
Blest be the man that spares these stones,
And curst be he that moves my bones.”

The Dwarf lived in resurrectioning times, and he had probably a shrewd suspicion that a special interest would attach to his remains. I do not know whether or where the malediction has fallen.

“There is,” said Kant, “the divine in every man.” If the divine was not fully developed in the poor misshapen creature of whom we have been speaking, there was at least a twinkle of it, misanthrope and irritable sprite as he was.

**THE ORIGINAL BALLAD OF THE
DOWIE DENS**

THE ORIGINAL BALLAD OF THE DOWIE DENS.

THE two well-known ballads of the Yarrow—viz., “Rare Willy’s drowned in Yarrow” and “The Dowie Dens”—have presented several difficulties to editors, both in respect of internal consistency and historical reference. The inconsistency in the stanzas has been sufficient to mar the complete unity of each, and suggests the need of revision and removal. To effect this is our present aim, and also to show that there is a still older ballad of the Yarrow than either of those now known, from which they have been mainly taken.

The former ballad—“Rare Willy’s drowned in Yarrow”—was printed for the first time in Allan

Ramsay's 'Tea-Table Miscellany' (1724), where it consists of four stanzas. The first of these points distinctly to a maiden lover as the personage of the ballad, while the second stanza as clearly refers to a matron. They are as follows:—

1.

“ Willy's rare and Willy's fair,
And Willy's wondrous bonny,
And Willy hecht¹ to marry me,
Gin e'er he married ony.

2.

Yestreen I made my bed fu' braid,
This night I'll make it narrow ;
For a' the live-lang winter night
I'll lie twin'd² o' my marrow.”

The other stanzas—three and four—carry out the idea of the ballad as referring to a betrothed maiden. The ballad is repeated, as Ramsay gave it, by David Herd in his 'Scots Songs' (1759 and 1776), i. 82.

The first indication in print of the ballad afterwards named by Sir Walter Scott “The Dowie

¹ *Hecht* is promised.

² *Twin'd* is, of course, parted or separated from.

Dens of Yarrow," is found in Herd's 'Scots Songs' (i. 145). This consists of four stanzas under the heading, "To the tune of Leaderhaughs and Yarrow." The lady who speaks throughout in those stanzas is obviously not a matron, but simply a betrothed maiden. Yet certain of the stanzas occur in Scott's ballad, first given in the 'Minstrelsy' in 1802-3, and this ballad has clearly as its main import a reference to persons already married. In the tenth stanza, after the treacherous stroke, the dying man says:—

"Gae hame, gae hame, guid-brother John,
And tell your sister Sarah
To come and lift her leafu' lord,—
He's sleepin' sound on Yarrow."

But the immediately following stanza suggests only a love relation between the two as betrothed persons:—

"Yestreen I dream'd a dolefu' dream,
I fear there will be sorrow ;
I dream'd I pu'd the heather green,
Wi' my true love on Yarrow."

(In Herd it is, "the birk sae green.")

And with the same bearing comes next the stanza, almost unequalled in love poetry:—

“ O gentle wind that bloweth south
From where my love repaireth,
Convey a kiss from his dear mouth,
And tell me how he fareth.”

(In Herd, “from ” is “to.”)

These two stanzas occur in the fragment printed
by Herd, and also the next one :—

“ But in the glen strive armèd men,
They’ve wrought me dule and sorrow ;
They’ve slain, they’ve slain the comeliest swain,—
He bleeding lies on Yarrow.”

Scott, we may note, has changed one line here,
and greatly for the worse. He writes—

“ They’ve slain,—the comeliest knight they’ve slain.”

Possibly it may turn out that the slain man was
not a knight at all, and that the word “swain ”
was the only appropriate one. Clearly, at least,
we have here three stanzas which do not natu-
rally refer to the relation of husband and wife,
but to that of betrothed lovers. The ballad of
“The Dowie Dens ” is thus, like that of “Willy’s
drowned in Yarrow,” rendered inconsistent and
incongruous.

Several attempts have been made to remove

these incongruities, but not with complete success. Professor Aytoun has the merit of having seen the incongruity in "Willy's drowned in Yarrow," and attempted to remedy it. He evidently holds that this ballad refers to a betrothed maiden, the death of whose lover was caused by drowning, not by violence; but he still retains in his reconstructed version the stanza beginning—

"Yestreen I made my bed fu' braid,"

which obviously points to a matron as the speaker. And in his version of "The Dowie Dens" he as obviously retains two of Herd's stanzas, already quoted, which can refer only to one in the position of a maiden lover.

It may be supposed that these two ballads refer to two different incidents, — the one, "Willy's drowned in Yarrow," to a maiden deprived of her betrothed lover by the accident of drowning; the other to a wife whose husband was slain by her own kinsmen, and treacherously. But this difference of incident is far from conclusive. There is quite a possibility of uniting the two things,—death by violence and the body being found in the stream. And little or no

stress should be laid on the rhythmical ending of "The Dowie Dens," in the repetition of the word Yarrow,—as making it specifically different from the other ballad,—for versions, especially the earliest, whether fragmentary or complete, are not at all uniform in this particular. But there is another explanation, and one which helps to remove the incongruities in the two ballads themselves. This is to be found in the fact that there was an earlier ballad of the Yarrow than either that known as "Willy's drowned in Yarrow" or "The Dowie Dens;" that the stanzas given by Ramsay under the former head, and those given by Herd "To the tune of Leaderhaughs and Yarrow," are simply portions — harmonious portions — of one, and this the earlier ballad; and further, that "The Dowie Dens" as given by Sir Walter Scott was a mixed, therefore incongruous, reference to the incident of the earlier ballad, and to a later incident in the relations of the families of Scott of Thirlestane and Scott of Tuschielaw.

This original ballad, now that it has been discovered, explains nearly everything. The heroine was really a maiden lover; her betrothed was

slain directly by her brother in the course of an unequal combat; his body was thrown into the Yarrow, and there found by her; and any incongruity in representing her both as maiden and matron is explained by the mixing up of the later or Thirlestane incident with the earlier one. Here is the older ballad in full:—

1.

“At Dryhope lived a lady fair,
The fairest flower in Yarrow;
And she refused nine noble men
For a servan’ lad in Gala.

2.

Her father said that he should fight
The nine lords all to-morrow;
And he that should the victor be,
Would get the Rose of Yarrow.

3.

Quoth he, ‘You’re nine an’ I’m but ane,
And in that there’s no much marrow;
Yet I shall fecht ye man for man,
In the dowie dens o’ Yarrow.’

4.

She’s kissed his lips and combed his hair,
As oft she’d done before, O,
An’ set him on her milk-white steed,
Which bore him on to Yarrow.

5.

When he got o'er yon high, high hill,
 An' down the dens o' Yarrow,
 There did he see the nine lords all,
 But there was not one his marrow.

6.

'Now here ye're nine, an' I'm but ane,
 But yet I am not sorrow;
 For here I'll fecht ye man for man,
 For my true love in Yarrow.'

7.

Then he wheel'd round and fought so fierce,
 Till the seventh fell in Yarrow;
 When her brother sprang from a bush behind,
 And ran his body thorough.

8.

He never spoke more words than these,
 An' they were words o' sorrow:
 'Ye may tell my true love, if ye please,
 That I'm sleepin' sound in Yarrow.'

9.

They've ta'en the young man by the heels,
 And trailed him like a harrow,
 And then they flung the comely youth
 In a whirlpool o' Yarrow.

10.

The lady said, 'I dreamed yestreen,
 I fear it bodes some sorrow,
 That I was pu'in' the heather green
 On the scroggy braes o' Yarrow.'

11.

Her brother said, 'I'll read your dream,
But it should cause nae sorrow;
Ye may go seek your lover hame,
For he's sleepin' sound in Yarrow.'

12.

Then she rode o'er yon gloomy height,
An' her heart was fu' o' sorrow,
But only saw the clud o' night,
Or heard the roar o' Yarrow.

13.

But she wandered east, so did she wast,
And searched the forest thorough,
Until she spied her ain true love
Lyin' deeply drowned in Yarrow.

14.

His hair it was five quarters lang,
Its colour was the yellow;
She twined it round her lily hand,
And drew him out o' Yarrow.

15.

She kissed his lips and combed his head,
As oft she'd done before, O;
She laid him o'er her milk-white steed,
An' bore him home from Yarrow.

16.

She washed his wounds in yon well-strand,
And dried him wi' the hollan',
And aye she sighed and said, 'Alas!
For my love I had him chosen.'

17.

'Go hold your tongue,' her father said,
'There's little cause for sorrow ;
I'll wed ye on a better lad
Than ye ha'e lost in Yarrow.'

18.

'Haud your ain tongue, my faither dear,
I canna' help my sorrow ;
A fairer flower ne'er sprang in May
Than I ha'e lost in Yarrow.

19.

I meant to make my bed fu' wide,
But you may make it narrow,
For now I've nae to be my guide,
But a deid man drowned in Yarrow.

20.

An' aye she screighed and cried, 'Alas !
Till her heart did break wi' sorrow,
An' sank into her faither's arms,
'Mang the dowie dens o' Yarrow."

In thus producing for the first time an additional version of the ballad of the Yarrow, I may be properly asked to give my ground and authority. This I readily do. The version is due to the memory and the care of an old man in Peeblesshire, now deceased, who was a worthy type of what is best in our fast-decaying old-

world character—its simplicity, homeliness, and steady uprightness. The late William Welsh, Peeblesshire cottar and poet, as he was wont to designate himself—being the author of a volume of poems and tales relating to local topics—gave me the poem, of which the above is an exact copy. I knew the old man well. He was, when I first became personally acquainted with him, above seventy years of age, but hale, healthy, and in perfect possession of his faculties, shrewd, acute, and much above the common. For several years he paid me an annual visit. I had great pleasure in his conversation — genial, humorous, pawky. He moralised as only a Scotsman can; but his epigrammatic flashes kept his sententiousness from being prosy. He wrote out for me the version of the ballad as I have given it, stating very explicitly that it was from the recitation of his mother and grandmother. I questioned him closely on the point, but to this statement he steadily adhered. I asked him to give me answers to certain questions in writing, which he did. The ballad, he said, was recited by his mother,—his grandmother had a copy of

the same in her father's handwriting, and thus the poem came down to him. As dates are of importance in a case of this sort, I got from him a statement in writing in answer to questions on those points, and also other corroborative particulars. These are to the following effect:—

Robert Welsh—great-great-grandfather of W. Welsh—was born about 1686, died 1766. He farmed Faldonside, near Abbotsford, well known as once the property of the Ker who held the pistol to Mary's bosom on the night of Rizzio's slaughter. His son married Janet Lees, from Galashiels, who was born 1726, died 1789. Their son married Margaret Yule, who was born at Falahill, in Heriot, in 1761, and died in 1819. William Welsh himself was born at Heriot Tower, 6th May 1799, and left it in 1819. "The grandmother," William Welsh writes, "had a fine ear for music, and had a copy of the song in her father's writing (queer crooked letters), which Mr Haig, the schoolmaster of Heriot, could read fluently, and called it the Queen Anne's hand. He transcribed it into the modern style, and gave a copy to my mother (who was

also very musical) for the sake of [I suppose he means in place of] the old manuscript. I kept Haig's copy till it got into pieces, and was lately burnt when cleaning the house."—(Letter, 14th February 1878.) This would take the MS. of the ballad back at least to the early part of last century. William Welsh adds the following: "An old woman, a mantua-maker, whose name was Marion Tod, and whose house I frequented often when a boy of seven years, sung it exactly the same way; and many youngsters came to hear auld Gifford, as they called her, because she came from thereabouts, sing the 'Dowie Dens o' Yarrow.' Once, when I was a young man, I was singing it to a young lass and an old maid; and when I had done, I turned up the young one's head, which was hanging very low, and saw the tears on her cheeks; and the old one, looking serious, said, 'Poor man! I could ha'e liket him mysel'."—(Letter, 14th February 1878.) If these statements are even generally correct—and I see no ground to doubt them, even as to details—this version of "The Dowie Dens" is older than the earliest printed fragment by Herd, and probably as early as

"Rare Willy's drowned in Yarrow," first printed by Ramsay in 1724. Sir Walter Scott's version is confessedly a compilation; Motherwell's, taken from the recitation of an old woman in Kilbarchan, is still later. All this points to the conclusion that we have in the version now offered the oldest, probably the original, ballad of "The Dowie Dens of Yarrow."

This conclusion is strengthened, if we look to internal evidence. The whole tone and frame of this ballad are from beginning to end simple, uniform, consistent—a unity of narrative feeling. The stanzas which in the other two ballads are incongruous find here their natural place. There is ample, intelligible motive for the slaughter of the lover. He is no knight or noble lord, as in Scott's ballad, but an ignoble person—"a servan' lad in Gala." This base personage has dared to fall in love with a daughter of Scott of Dryhope,—one of the most ready freebooters on the Border,—the laird of those glens of Dryhope and Kirkstead that run up through varied heather and bracken sheen to the Blacklaw and the heights of Glenrath — Hopes which now we love and prize

for matchless charm, for gleam and murmur of burn, for solitary birk that drapes the seldom visited linn pool—Hopes which the reiver cared for, because they could conveniently conceal, say, four hundred kine taken from Bewcastle Waste on the English side. More than all, this love is reciprocated: the daughter of Dryhope finds some manliness, some nobility in the “servan’ lad in Gala,” who may possibly never have ridden in a reiver’s band. This surely was an out-of-the-way lass in those times, with some strange modern notions worthy of the evolution of the two hundred years that followed. But her brothers do not at all like this sort of arrangement — “a servan’ lad in Gala” forsooth! Here is a motive for his being put out of the way at once ere he marries their sister,—tenfold more powerful in those times than any question about dower, or even hatred from blood-feud. For this latter motive did not prevent marriages between families, even while blood-feuds were unstanched. Witness Kers and Scotts, and Peeblesshire alliances many.

Then here comes the romance part of the

affair—the fitting explanation of how the incompatibility of circumstances was to be dealt with. And this is how the minstrel pictures it. The father of the lady, hopeless of breaking down her love, proposes that the “servan’ lad” should fight the nine lords—that is, lairds, for lord means no more than this,—simply, at the utmost, lord of a barony—who are suitors for his daughter’s hand. She is called “the Rose of Yarrow”: and while this phrase does not occur in Scott’s version, it is to be found in the West Country one—from Kilbarchan—given by Motherwell.

“The Rose of Yarrow” was to fall to the victor, who in this case was not the least likely to be the “servan’ lad.” He, however, accepts the unequal conditions. Then he slays seven of his opponents; and as the seventh fell he is treacherously run through “from a bush behind” by the brother of his love, who apparently was an interested spectator of the unequal contest. The lover sends a dying message to his lady-love. Then comes a stanza, not in Scott’s version, but happily congruous with the whole story. The man who

is now down on the field is not a knight, only a servant—one of base degree; hence he gets no knightly treatment, not even decent human regard; his lot is only shameful indignity.

“They’ve ta’en the young man by the heels,
And trailed him like a harrow,
And then they flung the comely youth
In a whirlpool o’ Yarrow.”

Then the lady has the ominous dream about

“Pu’in’ the heather green
On the scroggy braes o’ Yarrow.”

“Scroggy braes”—quite true, not on the “dowie houns.” There is no heather there,—only the waesome bent which, bowing to the autumn winds, makes them dowie; but on the “scroggy braes” there it is now, as any one may see. But “scroggy” is better than all. This expresses exactly the look of the stunted trees and bushes on the braes of Yarrow—two and a half or three centuries ago, when the forest was decaying—such as only a native minstrel could have seen or felt. “The scroggy braes,”—this was never said before in Scottish ballad or minstrel song,—yet it is so true and so ancient!

Her brother reads her dream for her,—tells
her bluntly enough, not sympathising with her,
or caring for her feelings, to

“Go seek your lover hame,
For he’s sleepin’ sound in Yarrow.”

There is surely a touch of the direst irony
here,—the dead man,—beloved,—“sleepin’
sound.” She sets out in search of him, and
then there comes a stanza which, supposing
this ballad to have been known in the early
part of last century, as it probably was, ob-
viously suggested to Logan the verse in his
ballad of Yarrow which Scott prized so highly,
and which sets Logan higher than any other
thing he is known to have written. The
stanzas in the original, as now for the first
time printed, are—

“Then she rode o’er yon gloomy height,
An’ her heart was fu’ o’ sorrow,
But only saw the clud o’ night,
Or heard the roar o’ Yarrow.

But she wandered east, so did she wast,
And searched the forest thorough,
Until she spied her ain true love
Lyin’ deeply drowned in Yarrow.”

In Logan's poem, which appeared in 1770, we have these lines, which are simply those of the old ballad, and which must be regarded as a mere copy, supposing the ballad to have been floating on the memories of people so early as I represent it—

“They sought him east, they sought him west,
They sought him all the forest thorough;
They only saw the cloud of night,
They only heard the roar of Yarrow.”

That Logan was a plagiarist there is, I fear, other proof.

The maiden, searching, finds her dead lover in the water. He had been violently slain, and then brutally thrown into the stream. This is the reconciliation of the *dénouement* of the two ballads, “Willy's drowned in Yarrow” and the modern “Dowie Dens.” The stricken man lay in the

“Cleavin' o' the craig,
She fand him drowned in Yarrow.”

Then there comes a stanza not found in Scott's version—picturesque, touching, complete in itself—such as painter might limn, and, doing it well, make himself immortal:—

“His hair it was five quarters lang,
Its colour was the yellow;
She twined it round her lily hand,
And drew him out o’ Yarrow.”

What a picture! the lass wading, it may be, into the water, grasping the floating yellow hair, twining it round her lily hand,—how despairingly, yet how fervently,—clasping it, the last tie amid the moving stream, and drawing him tenderly out of the water flow to the river bank, where at least he would unmoved lie,—be, though dead, her own.

Though there is nothing in Scott’s version corresponding to this, there is a stanza in Motherwell’s, but it is a bad version. It is not his but her own hair which is spoken of, and she manages to draw him out of the stream by this!—

“Her hair it was five quarters lang,
’Twas like the gold for yellow;
She twisted it round his milk-white hand,
And she’s drawn him hame frae Yarrow.”

There can hardly be a question that the original version is much more natural and appropriate, as referring to the hair of the dead lover,

lying in the water. "The milk-white hand" is certainly that of the lady, not the man. Then the simple drawing him out of the stream by the hair, the putting him on her milk-white steed, and bearing him home from Yarrow, is a representation infinitely superior to the coarse idea of "drawing him hame frae Yarrow" by his locks, as pictured in Motherwell's version.

Then there is the solution of another incongruity. Stanza 18 is obviously the original of the second stanza in "Willy's drowned in Yarrow," where as it stands it has no relevancy whatever. Here it is in a form that is perfectly natural and appropriate. "I meant," says the maiden lover,—

"I meant to make my bed fu' wide,
But you may make it narrow,
For now I've nane to be my guide,
But a deid man drowned in Yarrow."

How thoroughly superior to the incongruous stanza of "Willy's drowned in Yarrow"! Not—

"Yestreen I made my bed fu' wide,"
but—

"I meant to make my bed fu' wide,
And you may make it narrow."

You, if not the slayer of my lover, yet the sympathiser with the assassins!—do as you choose with me. The guide of my life is gone; the light is cast out with the “deid man drowned in Yarrow.”

The stanza (16) which contains a reference to the “well-strand,”—the rivulet flowing from the spring—her washing his wounds therein, and drying them “wi’ the hollan’,”—is very true, natural, and touching. It is thoroughly Scottish in feeling, fact, and diction. Has one not heard of “the well-strand,”—“the meadow well-strand,”—from one’s boyhood? And “the hollan’” we know well. All through those old times, down to the middle of the eighteenth century, the brown linen made out of the flax in Scotland, and made largely, was sent across to Holland—Haarlem especially—to be bleached. There it was dipped in lye and butter-milk; and after six months—from March to October—returned to this country,—pure, clean, and white. The damsel wished to honour her dead lover, as best she might, with the purest in her gift. It was what she wore in her joy:—

“Her kurchy was of Holland clear,
Tyed on her bonny brow.”

With regard to the historical reference of the original ballad, I confess I can say very little. If it really concerns a daughter of the house of Dryhope, as it seems to do, this would bring the date not further back than the middle of the sixteenth century, when the forest-stead of Dryhope was given to a Scott. It is quite probable, of course, that the same family might have been there long before, simply as keepers for the Crown of the forest-stead. In the alleged residence of the lady at Dryhope,—in the phrases, “The fairest flower in Yarrow,” “the Rose of Yarrow,” we have a distinct suggestion of “the Flower of Yarrow,”—that is, Mary, rather Marion Scott, daughter of John Scott of Dryhope, not Philip, as Sir Walter Scott puts it, who was married to Wat of Harden in 1576. It seems to me possible, even indeed probable, from those references—the first, the oldest yet ascertained—that the ballad may actually refer to Mary Scott, the “Flower of Yarrow.” This incident may have been an episode in her life that took

place previously to her marriage with Scott of Harden. There must have been associations with this woman of quite a special kind, apart simply from the ordinary occurrence of her marriage with a neighbouring Border laird and reiver, which led to the intense, widespread, and persistent memory of her that has come down to our own day. This of course would imply that the falling into the father's arms, which fitly concludes the ballad, did not mean the conclusion of her career. The terminations of ballads of this class are usually in the same conventional style. And probably "the Flower of Yarrow" was no exception to the run of her sex in having more than one love experience.

The truth of the view now given seems to me to be confirmed by the unsatisfactory nature of the historical references adduced by Sir Walter Scott in illustration of the ballad, and of other suggestions made since his time. The duel on Deuchar Swire must be set aside as having no direct bearing on the circumstances; and certain important particulars of the narrative cannot be explained by supposing the ballad to refer to

the "Walter Scott of Tuschielaw" who eloped with Grisel Scott of Thirlestane in 1616, and who is assumed to be the Walter Scott slaughtered shortly afterwards by Scott of Bonnington and his accomplices. I think it probable, however, that these later incidents may have come to be mixed up with the earlier in popular tradition and song, and thus with the story and the fate of the "servan' lad in Gala." Hence the double reference in Scott's ballad, confessedly a compilation from different versions.



THE YARROW OF WORDSWORTH
AND SCOTT



THE YARROW OF WORDSWORTH AND SCOTT.

NEARLY in the centre of the Borderland of Scotland,—through the heart of the mountainous district known of old as the Middle March and “The Forest,”—there flows, from the south-west to the north-east, a stream much spoken of for the last ninety years, and famous in story, song, and romantic ballad. This is “the Yarrow,”—literally, perhaps, “the rough stream.” It is a broken water certainly, but a rough stream it is not in any proper sense of the word. From the point where it leaps from the Loch of St Mary, full-born, to where it is fused with its brother water, the Ettrick, not far below the battle-field of Philiphaugh and the

grey ruins of Newark, it is usually bright and sparkling, passing from rapid stream to calm reflective pool, but for the most part rippling, restless,—rushing down amid the smooth rounded stones of its softly musical strand. To the ear which listens and broods over its flow, there seems to be a suggestion of that cadence of the ballad measure, which is so appropriate to the pathos of its story. The valley of the Yarrow—which may be taken as beginning above the Loch of the Lowes, and running north-eastward for some twenty-five miles—has hills on either side of the rounded massive kind, that flow down to the stream in a consenting parallelism and harmony. Those in the upper reaches of the valley, especially if we take in the tributary Meggat Water, have a marked impressiveness and grandeur, rising with massive fronts to more than 2600 feet, their sides cut and cloven into deep grey heughs and scaurs, where of old the red-deer herded; but from the outflow of the Yarrow from the Loch they are gently sloping heights of some 1500 to 1800 feet, green and wavy in outline. The valley has thus no Highland cliffs to show, no great height of moun-

tain, no striking grandeur of peak or summit; it has nothing by which it can appeal with sudden and intense impression to the eye or the sensuous imagination. Yet it has a charm, has had a charm through many ages. People, even at first sight, look and wonder, are stirred and brood over the scene,—over the lonely river, as it passes on amid those green, soft-sloping, wavy hills; the placid monotone of its bare treeless scenery; the deep pastoral stillness of its braes and hillsides, broken only it may be by a fitful sway and sough of the water, or the bleating of the sheep that, white and motionless, dot the knowes. And if you stay there for some days, in summer or autumn, you will find that the stream and valley know well the mists and the sunshine, the rapid change of grey darkening cloud and bright gleaming sun-glimpses through the mottled heavens, that touch the heart to pathos and then to joy: it has, in a word, its “dowie dens” and its “bonnie houms,” reflected it would seem in its sad and joyous song.

Around this stream,—this valley with its hills, its ruined towers, its storied names,—


there has grown, through the last three centuries at least, a fulness of stirring associations and of imaginative feeling, a wealth of romantic ballad and pathetic song, such as is not paralleled in Scotland; such as is only matched in some respects by the lyrics that rose in the time of Burns to life and beauty on the banks of the Lugar and the Doon. The Yarrow we see is thus not the Yarrow we feel. The bare stream has been uplifted to the heaven of imagination; to the dreamland of poetry and pathos. That quiet Border stream has flowed for many ages through the heart of the land of Old Romance; and it will flow in the time to come with a quickening power and thrill for all souls capable of being touched by the simplicity, the strength, the tragedy of our old-world life, and of love faithful to death. It belongs now to the realm of the ideal, and this encircles us as the heavens, and changes not, "whate'er betide." But its ancient story and ballad I cannot here touch in detail. I wish now only to look for a short time at a certain modern outcome of the older minstrels' lays, and try to realise that mysterious charm which the Vale of Yarrow has exercised

over the spirits of two men of varied genius,—men who were able to express in the melody of accomplished song what many have been able only to feel,—I mean William Wordsworth and Walter Scott.

It is now eighty-nine years since Wordsworth passed down the vale of the Tweed, and first linked his name to the long line of the minstrels whose hearts the Yarrow has stirred to song. This visit to Tweedside and the Borderland recalls strange and thrilling memories of a time long gone. It takes us back to the rich and glorious dawn of our modern poetry and romance; and we seem to see moving in it the young and eager faces of some of the men who were destined to fill all Britain, even all Europe, with the thrill of their rhythm and the power of their song. These men have done their work; they have now passed away; and we have but their writings and their graves. Walter Scott, then but thirty-two, was haunting Tweedside and the glens of the Borders in search of old legend and romance, and the Ettrick Shepherd was herding on the hills of Leithen Water. As yet neither had made his mark in literature, but Hogg was

seeing ecstatic visions on the hillside, and Scott was going about restlessly crooning to himself the stanzas of the as yet unpublished 'Lay of the Last Minstrel'; and the young century had the promise of one of the richest summers of literature the world has known. When Wordsworth and Scott met for the first time at Lasswade, and afterwards conferred together on Tweedside, at Melrose and Jedburgh, who, looking to that day and comparing it with the present, will venture to give us words adequate to estimate the wealth of ideas, of purifying ennobling emotion, of ideals that lift us above self and pelf and the down-dragging world, which has been added by these two men alone to the treasury, the spiritual treasury of mankind?

Wordsworth, looking from any one of the mountains of Cumberland, which he was accustomed to climb, might have seen in a clear day the shadowy forms of the Cheviots and other Border hills; but if he had been in Scotland before, it was only to cross the Border. In August 1803, he, his sister Dorothy, one of the noblest, most richly endowed, and most self-sacrificing of women, and Coleridge, their friend,



left Keswick for a tour in Scotland. The travelling equipage was an Irish car and one horse—a slow-going mode of locomotion truly; but we may be thankful it was so, and the tour so leisurely done. There was much keen observation and rich meditation,—much fine emotion by the way, many stirrings of heart and fancy, which are now immortal. Compare this way of travelling and its results with the boasted modern method of being shot through the air like live luggage, at the rate of fifty or sixty miles an hour, and think of the fine poetic fancies which usually are inspired in the railway carriage! Ours is the day of the maximum of locomotion; is it not also the day of the minimum of reflection? After journeying through the Highlands, Wordsworth and his sister on their return home visited Scott and his wife at Lasswade on the 17th September 1803—the memorable day on which the two greatest men of the time first clasped each other's hand. Wordsworth and his sister parted with Scott at Lasswade, under an engagement to meet again in two days at Melrose. The two travellers made their way to Peebles and the Tweed. Just before this time the fine old wood at Neidpath

had been cut down by its owner—the Duke of Queensberry—to spite his heir of entail. It was on a Sunday that Wordsworth visited Neidpath Castle, and on his return from it he was accosted and taken aside in Peebles by some one in authority, and required to give an account of himself—the poet being probably, and not unnaturally, by the municipal mind considered a sort of vagrant or tramp! He seems to have escaped with an admonition: they did not put him in jail. The result of that day's visit to Neidpath was the famous sonnet on the destruction of the wood there. He commemorates the outrage, but has an eye for Nature's remedy of its own wrongs,—man's outrage, Nature's healing:—

“Many hearts deplored
The fate of those old trees ; and oft with pain
The traveller at this day will stop and gaze
On wrongs, which Nature scarcely seems to heed :
For sheltered places, bosoms, nooks, and bays,
And the pure mountains, and the gentle Tweed,
And the green silent pastures, yet remain.”

Leaving Peebles, Wordsworth and his sister went down the valley of the Tweed. Inner-

leithen, Traquair, Elibank, Ashiestiel, each had its share of notice. At length they reached Clovenfords. The question now was, Shall we turn aside to Yarrow—that is, down by Yair away to the junction of the Ettrick with the Tweed, and so up the Vale of Yarrow? There was something of a debate between the poet and his sister on this point. The sister was obviously eager to go and see the stream that flowed through the heart of old romance. The poet himself seems to have been in a curious and for him unwonted mood. For some reason, convenience or other, he was not disposed to go. They did not at least visit Yarrow on this occasion, and we have the colloquy between brother and sister in “Yarrow Unvisited.” The poet at first says almost lightly:—

“ ‘There’s Gala Water, Leader Haughs,
Both lying right before us ;
And Dryborough, where with chiming Tweed
The lintwhites sing in chorus ;
There’s pleasant Teviotdale, a land
Made blithe with plough and harrow ;
Why throw away a needful day
To go in search of Yarrow ?

“ ‘What’s Yarrow but a river bare
That glides the dark hills under ?
There are a thousand such elsewhere,
As worthy of your wonder.’
Strange words they seemed of slight and scorn ;
My true-love sighed for sorrow ;
And looked me in the face, to think
I thus could speak of Yarrow !”

Sometimes an accident of arrangement stays us from doing what we most desire. Perhaps there was something of that sort here. But later stanzas reveal a deeper feeling in the heart of the poet. It was not that he slighted the stream that he would apparently pass it by. Rather, it was almost too sacred for him to see, to look at, at least, in a hurried way. It was to him already an ideal of beauty, grace, romance. He “had a vision—a Yarrow—of his own.” And this ideal vision of the Yarrow must have been founded mainly on the ballads and songs referring to it, which had been given in the ‘Minstrelsy of the Border’ in 1802 and 1803. Hamilton of Bangour’s “Braes of Yarrow” was clearly also familiar to him. ‘The Lay of the Last Minstrel’—the first of Scott’s great creations—though written, was not published until 1805. But obviously

Wordsworth had already eagerly assimilated, and made part of himself the Yarrow of the 'Minstrelsy.' Here he found the Yarrow, no doubt, of the faded forest, of the Dowie Dens, of the Blackhouse tragedy, of the wan maiden awaking to life in St Mary's Kirk at the touch of her lover's hand, of the sweet flower of Dryhope wedded to the rough reiver, of the youth dead in his prime of love and promise in the cleaving of the crag. And the poet feared to undo the image, to confront his ideal with the real. Here is the true reason of "Yarrow Unvisited":—

"Be Yarrow stream unseen, unknown!
It must, or we shall rue it:
We have a vision of our own;
Ah! why should we undo it?
The treasured dreams of times long past,
We'll keep them, winsome marrow!
For when we're there, although 'tis fair,
'Twill be another Yarrow!"

Scott was afterwards to work on the old life, story, and legend in his own manner of recreation, idealising and picturing for the senses,—the harshness, even the coarseness, softened in the mellow light of memory,—so that we not only feel this curiously mixed past to be real,

but even rejoice in its strength and tenderness. Wordsworth, as his ballads on Yarrow show, was to take up the same material, deal with it in his own fashion—that is, pass it through the flow of his meditative fancy—and link it to emotions, which, while peculiarly and intensely the property of the poet himself,—the seer,—are so real, deep, and fitting that every true man afterwards feels them, and is enriched by the clear consciousness of the spiritual possession.

Eleven years pass away, and Wordsworth is once more in Scotland, and in the Borderland (1814). He lodged, he tells us, the night at Traquair, where Hogg joined him, coming across from Eltrive, and also Dr Anderson, the editor of the 'British Poets,' who was on a visit at the manse. It is probable, I think, from Wordsworth's own statement,¹ that he slept at some small hostelry, or public-house, in the village of Traquair, not at the manse, where I wish he had lodged. At this time the minister was the Rev. James Nicol, one of Scotland's true singers, though he has not left us very much of song.

¹ Works, vi. 41 (Knight's edition).

One of his best lyrics is "Where Quair rins sweet amang the flowers." Mr Nicol, however, was from home. Mrs Nicol seems to have entertained the stranger in the evening, sending for William Laidlaw, — Scott's friend, and the author afterwards of "Lucy's Flittin'," — who was living not far off, then tenant in Traquair Knowe, to meet him. Next morning the party, including, I think, Hogg, William Laidlaw, Dr Anderson, and Wordsworth, walked up by Newhall on to Glenlude and the watershed there, through one of the greenest, purest, most pathetic glens in the Borderland: the glen where the fringe of the birks, fragment of the old forest, first greets you in the early spring, and in autumn warns you by its wan tint of the fading life of the hillside,—a meet and sacred vestibule to Yarrow. It was from the ridge of the watershed of this valley, and the descent on the other side, that Wordsworth first saw the Yarrow. The ridge and descent give the best first view of the stream. The soft green wavy line of hills to the south, on the opposite side of the valley, arrest the eye; the stream is below, seen glancing and winding to the east; the hills on each

side conceal the river to the west, but hint its course. Eltrive Lake, Hogg's first assured and real home, whither he brought his bride, and where he lodged his old father in his declining years, is seen on the opposite side of the valley, where Eldin Hope opens and carries the eye up to the heights of Thirlestane overlooking the Ettrick. Dark broad-browed mountains, often misty-topped, bound the view to the west, where we know lie concealed St Mary's Loch, Loch of the Lowes, and high and dark Loch Skene. But immediately before us all is gently green, soft-flowing, sacred,—

“More pensive in sunshine,
Than others in moonshine,”—

bare, treeless, with but occasional purpling interspaces of heather; and though man has here and there set down a homestead, with some little planting round it, this does not break the simplicity and unity of the scene: Nature keeps hill and haugh still her own, and works on them through the varying year her own sweet wild will. Wordsworth was now in presence of the reality of his cherished ideal. And what

were his emotions? What did he say or sing,
in "Yarrow Visited"?

"And is this—Yarrow?—*This* the stream
Of which my fancy cherished,
So faithfully, a waking dream,
An image that hath perished!
O that some minstrel's harp were near
To utter notes of gladness,
And chase this silence from the air
That fills my heart with sadness!

Yet why? A silvery current flows
With uncontrolled meanderings;
Nor have these eyes by greener hills
Been soothed in all my wanderings.
And, through her depths, Saint Mary's Lake
Is visibly delighted;
For not a feature of those hills
Is in the mirror slighted.

A blue sky bends o'er Yarrow Vale,
Save where that pearly whiteness
Is round the rising sun diffused,
A tender, hazy brightness.

.

Delicious is the lay that sings
The haunts of happy lovers,
The path that leads them to the grove,
The leafy grove that covers:

And Pity sanctifies the verse
That paints, by strength of Sorrow,
The unconquerable strength of Love;
Bear witness, rueful Yarrow!

But thou, that didst appear so fair
To fond Imagination,
Dost rival in the light of day
Her delicate creation:
Meek loveliness is round thee spread,
A softness still and holy;
The grace of forest charms decayed,
And pastoral melancholy."

"You look on Yarrow," says Principal Shairp, "you repeat those four lines over to yourself, and you feel that the finer, more subtle essence of nature has never been more perfectly uttered in human words."¹

Clearly Wordsworth saw the Yarrow on a bright day, yet he felt a certain solitude of silence, and "pastoral melancholy." Still there are times when the phrase "the dowie dens" is not quite appropriate. There is also the feeling of "the bonnie houms" of Yarrow, which is equally real and true. The Yarrow, indeed, has

¹ From "The Three Yarrows," in 'Aspects of Poetry; being Lectures delivered at Oxford, 1881'—a book full of true insight and fine suggestion.

a peculiar aptitude for suiting itself to, in fact drawing out, varying moods of mind. There are few valleys, as I have already hinted, whose scenery is capable of greater contrasts at different times, and under different atmospheric conditions. It can smile and cheer in sunshine; it can softly soothe in its green pastoral calm; or when the stream steals through the misty haughs, it can sadden, even depress, by suggestions of awe, gloom, and indefiniteness. On the same day even, the stream is in the sunny noon clear and sparkling; in the gloaming, it wears a wan pathetic look. A sudden mountain shower will shroud it in gloom; to be followed by a sudden outburst of sunshine, which renders its green sloping braes at once golden and glad. It thus suits equally the emotion of finding the youth dead in "the cleavin' o' the crag," and the joy which thrills the lover over his successful suit.

Seventeen years have passed, and Wordsworth is now sixty-one, having conquered his position in the realm of English poetry,—a crowned monarch of song. Scott is sixty, and he too is an acknowledged lord,—the lord of romance. But, alas! the darkening margin of the eclipse

is now stealing over the noble brow, and he is on the eve of leaving Scotland for Italy, if haply he may be restored to himself and the world. Wordsworth and his daughter Dora came to see him at Abbotsford, on a Monday evening late in September. On the Tuesday, he, Scott, Dora Wordsworth, and some of Scott's family drove to Newark on the Yarrow. It was only the lower reach of the well-loved stream which that day they touched—

“Where Newark's stately tower
Looks out from Yarrow's birchen bower.”

Scott was seriously ill: it was the last day he was destined to look on Yarrow, the stream of his heart, but the end was not yet so ominously certain. There was still a hope for him in the approaching journey to Italy. We can thus understand the feelings with which his friend, Wordsworth, accompanied him to Newark. We have the memory of the visit for ever preserved to us and the world by Wordsworth, in “Yarrow Revisited,” over which the shadow of Scott's illness, “the sore pressure of fact,” as his friend tells us, lies very heavily. Ah! that pressure of

fact, how it restrains the poet's flight, yet deepens
the outcome of the poet's heart !

“Once more, by Newark's castle-gate
Long left without a warder,
I stood, looked, listened, and with Thee,
Great Minstrel of the Border !

Grave thoughts ruled wide on that sweet day,
Their dignity installing
In gentle bosoms, while sere leaves
Were on the bough, or falling ;

But breezes played, and sunshine gleamed
The forest to embolden ;
Reddened the fiery hues, and shot
Transparence through the golden.

For busy thoughts the stream flowed on
In foamy agitation ;
And slept in many a crystal pool
For quiet contemplation :
.

Past, present, future, all appeared
In harmony united,
Like guests that meet, and some from far
By cordial love invited.

And if, as Yarrow, through the woods
And down the meadow ranging
Did meet us with unaltered face,
Though we were changed and changing ;

If, *then*, some natural shadows spread
Our inward prospect over,
The soul's deep valley was not slow
Its brightness to recover.

.
For thee, O Scott ! compelled to change
Green Eildon Hill and Cheviot
For warm Vesuvio's vine-clad slopes,
And leave thy Tweed and Teviot

For mild Sorrento's breezy waves ;
May classic Fancy, linking
With native Fancy her fresh aid,
Preserve thy heart from sinking !"

"Yarrow Unvisited" has been represented as indicating reserve of force—the writing of one not caring to expend the imaginative power on an actual scene ; holding back in a sort of prodigality of youthful power and exuberance. I confess I see little of this in the first poem, just as I do not see in the last—"Yarrow Revisited"—any traces of halting or vacillation or imperfect reflection. In "Yarrow Unvisited" there is simply a half-playful, half-regretful apology for absorption in other work or scenes, almost certainly a wish not to disturb, by a hurried visit, a long-cherished ideal. In "Yarrow Visited" there is an abundant realisation, though in an

unexpected way, of the imaginative vision. And in "Yarrow Revisited" there is the force of "the sore pressure of fact," the sense of the writer's own years gone, and of his friend's too obviously impending fate,—this and the suggestions of the autumnal day, finely, tenderly, pathetically intermingled. The three Yarrows have been taken as typical of what are regarded as "the styles" or forms of Wordsworth's poetry. In the first, there is a literalness and directness of reference to what might be supposed to be the mere outward features. In the second, there is the distinct growth of reflection, fused with the carefulness of outlook, and the interpretation of scenery through subtle spiritual symbolism. In the third, the characteristics are emotion and reflection, and saddening thoughts—seeking relief, but in no way hopefully. In all of them there are some stanzas of as high an order of poetry as Wordsworth himself has reached, or as any other of Yarrow's singers has given us through the ages, and that is saying much.

Wordsworth and his daughter Dora left Abbotsford on the Thursday. Scott, with difficulty, wrote some lines in Dora's album, at her request.

They contain a touching reminiscence, and an ominous foreboding. At Jedburgh, twenty-eight years before, Scott had recited to Wordsworth cantos of the 'Lay of the Last Minstrel,' ere it was published. Wordsworth had liked it, and approved, and Scott, the young poet, was encouraged. Now Scott sat down in his feebleness and wrote these lines:—

“And meet it is that he, who saw
The first faint rays of genius burn,
Should mark their latest light with awe,
Low glimmering from their funeral urn.”

Bishop Wordsworth of St Andrews, in 'Annals of my Early Life,' recently published, gives the lines as follows:—

“'Tis well the gifted eye, which saw
The first light sparks of fancy burn,
Should mark its latest flash with awe,
Low glimmering from its funeral urn.”

The journey to Italy was of no avail. No human love, no human emotion, could stay the march of the all-crushing power. Passing through the ford of the Tweed that evening, on their return to Abbotsford, Wordsworth turned

round and caught a sight of the Eildons. The light shed on the triple heights gleamed weirdly, and it touched him; and afterwards he wrote those lines:—

“ A trouble, not of clouds, or weeping rain,
Nor of the setting sun's pathetic light
Engendered, hangs o'er Eildon's triple height :
Spirits of Power, assembled there, complain
For kindred power departing from their sight ;
While Tweed, best pleased in chanting a blythe strain,
Saddens his voice, again and yet again.
Lift up your hearts, ye Mourners ! for the might
Of the whole world's good wishes with him goes.
Blessings and prayers, in nobler retinue
Than sceptred king or laurelled conqueror knows,
Follow this wondrous Potentate. Be true,
Ye winds of ocean, and the midland sea,
Wafting your charge to soft Parthenope ! ”

The foreign land had nothing to show—nothing to stir or arrest the broken spirit. Once or twice Scott was roused ; but then it was at the sight of the tombs of the Stuarts in Rome or of the heather on the Italian hills, so like what there was on the braes of Yarrow. Nothing of classical poet, nothing of Italian verse came into the memory, but only a snatch like this under the Italian skies:—

“Oh ! it's up yon heathery mountain,
And doon yon bracken glen,
We daurna' gang a-milkin'
For Charlie and his men.”¹

This, too, was the last visit of Wordsworth to Yarrow. But when the Ettrick Shepherd died, in November 1835, the memories of the place came over him, and stirred him to a power of song, as characteristic as anything he has written :—

“When first, descending from the moorlands,
I saw the stream of Yarrow glide
Along a bare and open valley,
The Ettrick Shepherd was my guide.

When last along its banks I wandered,
Through groves which had begun to shed
Their golden leaves upon the pathways,
My steps the Border Minstrel led.

The mighty Minstrel breathes no longer,
'Mid mouldering ruins low he lies ;
And death upon the braes of Yarrow,
Has closed the Shepherd-poet's eyes.

Like clouds that rake the mountain-summits,
Or waves that own no curbing hand,
How fast has brother followed brother,
From sunshine to the sunless land !

¹ See Lockhart's 'Life,' vol. vii. p. 357.

Yet I, whose lips from infant slumber,
 Were earlier raised, remain to hear
 A timid voice, that asks in whispers,
 'Who next will drop and disappear?'

It is true of most Scottish poets, whose bent has been at all in the line of outward nature, that they have been first and most seriously impressed by the locality of their early surroundings. This has been a quickening and a nourishment to them, and we find the impression thus gathered moving through and tinging their after-poetry in various ways. The leaping rush and the linn-pool of the Ayrshire burn are first felt in "The Cherry and the Slae" of Alexander Montgomery. The soft moonlight on the hills high up on the Jed Water, and the power of its winter storms, are manifest in 'The Seasons' of James Thomson. Beattie in the 'Minstrel' shows the gleam of the sea, as he viewed it from the heights above Fordoun; and, greater than all, the streams, the glens, the haughs of his native Ayrshire thrilled the soul of Robert Burns, and he wove the banks and braes of the Doon,—

"Auld Coila's plains an' fells,
 Her moors red-brown wi' heather bells,
 Her banks and braes, her dens and dells,"—

as golden threads through his unsurpassed love lyrics. And, later than Burns, the melody of the sensitive, fine-souled Tannahill was poured forth amid "the braes of Gleniffer" and "Stanley's green shaw."

But Walter Scott was more markedly than any of his predecessors, or indeed any of his successors, a poet of places and names. The observational,—the noting of things, places, and incidents both local and national,—was his pre-eminently, and this it was that fed his historical imagination. These were with Scott in many instances the very substance of his work. And as with the poets I have mentioned,—as with Byron too by the Dee and under the shadow of Lochnagar,—Scott took the colouring of his poetry and the bent of his imagination from the streams, glens, and hills of his early childhood and youth,—particularly old Smailholme Tower and its crags; the long stately reaches of the Tweed at Kelso, where he was at school, and where as a boy he read the Percy Ballads; but, above all, the waters of the Yarrow and Ettrick.

But the place, the name, was only a part of the inspiration. Those place-names had come

down from the past charged with legend, story, tales of heroism, rude raids, love, sacrifice, and death,—charged, too, with dreams of the spiritual, the supersensible, world, often graceful as the fairy vision, often dark and weird as the most gruesome medieval fancy. They were suggestive of the fine forms that glimpse on the moors in the moonlight, of the dread weird terrors that, to the old imagination, haunted the darkness of the winter night, and were borne as of wings on the midnight winter storm. They were associated, above all, with national and local story, family feuds and traditions, hand to hand encounters, which had been set for the most part in intense, simple, yet touching and beautiful ballad and song;—

“Those strains to savage virtue dear
That won of yore the public ear,
Ere Polity, sedate and sage
Had quenched the fires of feudal rage.”

To Walter Scott, the poet, the near descendant of the ministers of Yarrow and Selkirk,¹ and thus

¹ John Rutherford, the minister of Yarrow, Scott's great-grandfather, married Christian Shaw, the daughter of the Rev. John Shaw of Selkirk.


the heir of all the memories of the vale and stream, the Yarrow was an object of overpassing interest. In a heredity of soul whose communion with the past was its innermost pulse, "the Forest," — the district of the Yarrow and the Ettrick, — was in name even redolent of past story, and full of suggestions that touched all the range of his fancy. The very desolation of it, its ruined peels, the modern bareness of hill and glen, had an especial charm for him. As strongly as the old "Violer," Nicol Bourne, he felt—

"Full many a place stands in hard case,
Where joy was wont beforrow,
With Humes that dwelt on Leader side,
And Scotts that dwelt on Yarrow."

In the heart of Scott, notwithstanding the apparent gaiety, social cheerfulness, and delight, there was through life a deep undercurrent of sadness. This very frequently tinges his description of scenery—especially of the Border district; and I cannot help feeling that this background of pathos is due partly to that mood of mind which broods over an interesting and stirring past not to be recalled, and partly to what may be called the monotone

of the Border moors, glens, and hills. At the brightest, the height of summer, the joy they inspire is a chastened one; and for many months of the year they are "waesome" as the wind soughs over the sapless bent, the faded brae-side, the browned and broken bracken, and the dark stretches of heather. There is a long winter, a slow, cold, halting spring, and it is late ere the life of summer comes to touch with colour the deathlike face of winter—not indeed, as a rule, until the yellow violet and the rock-rose peer in June, set like golden gems amid the tender shoots of the green hill-grass.

The very name of "the Forest" is linked with ancient story in a manner that touched Scott to the core—in fact, made him the singer and magician he was. It is redolent of the outdoor life of the whole line of the old Stuart kings. They, with all their failings, loved their native land with an inborn hereditary love, with a feeling of kinship born of the soil. They mixed with the people familiarly, and helped them personally as best they might; and being almost constantly in the saddle, tenting it in Yarrow,



liar power. There in that Forest there rose on the memory names and visions of unspeakable charm. Newark and Oakwood, where Michael Scott's lamp burned o' nights; the fairy Carterhaugh, where Janet waited on the eerie midnight moor for the fairy riders, and, woman-hearted, gripped her lover and tore him from the envious power and the jealousy of the Queen of Fairy; the Hangingshaw and the Outlaw, with his green-coated gallant riders, and his wide-summoning bugle-horn; the dowie dens and the grief-stricken maiden, her lips ruddy from kisses of her dead lover's wounds; Dryhope and the Flower of Yarrow; St Mary's Kirk, where only now the grouse-cock calls and the plover wails, yet suggestive of quaint and limitless romance; and the grave of the Wizard Priest—


“Whose bones were thrust
From company of holy dust”—

a lonely churchyard, where still the peasant,

“Dying, bids his bones be laid,
Where erst his simple fathers prayed.”

It was these—the names, the stories, the traditions, the legends of the past—which stirred

and filled the soul of Scott. For him they were enough without symbolical suggestion, musing, or reflection. They had been in some form or other a part of human experience, a stirring storied past, touching human sympathy, and even teaching human lessons, and the heart of Scott, like the heart of Shakespeare, was as wide as humanity. Scott's faculty lay in the directness and intensity of his feeling, in the transparent power of spontaneous art. And well it is that we should have this side represented and revived, especially in these times. For, notwithstanding the power of symbolism and reflection, when truly, purely, naturally evoked, there is a great danger on this side—the danger of morbid individualism, and the consequent overflow on what is sacred and pure and fitted to touch the universal heart, of a lurid and even degrading personal mood. Wordsworth has been a blessing to the land: others, as individual, have been a good deal the reverse. Scott was ever open to the outward—"the best shows of sky and earth"—the widest scope of story, tradition, natural scene. He was healthy at the core; because he was



open, waiting, reverent. As has been said: "Unlike Byron, who always drew from himself, his versatility was unbounded; like Shakespeare, he was equally at home with the clown and the sage; and, like that great dramatist, he—

‘Exhausted worlds, and then imagined new.’”¹

This passion for the Yarrow and the Border country was at the heart of Scott. It made him, and he enriched the land in turn.

“By Yarrow’s streams still let me stray,
Though none should guide my feeble way;
Still feel the breeze down Ettrick break,
Although it chill my withered cheek.”

This depth of interest enabled him to see and to feel what was good and pure, what was tender and pathetic, what was noble and heroic in the old life, the old manners, the old deeds there—and so to link this for ever with the sympathies—the universal heart of mankind—

“For thou upon a hundred streams,
By tales of love and sorrow,
Of faithful love, undaunted truth,
Hast shed the power of Yarrow.”

¹ Vedder, *Memoirs*, p. 83.

The introduction to the second canto of 'Marmion' lays bare the whole inner heart of Scott. It is devoted almost wholly to the Yarrow. It is the lifelong feeling of the man—deep, loving, passionate. Regret for the past, vivid imagining of it, old memories strong as if they were present perceptions, the softening and subduing power of old story—all, this we find :—

“ Yon Thorn—perchance whose prickly spears,
Have fenced him for three hundred years,
While fell around his green compeers—
Yon lonely Thorn, would he could tell
The changes of his parent dell,
Since he, so grey and stubborn now,
Waved in each breeze a sapling bough :
Would he could tell how deep the shade
A thousand mingled branches made ;
How broad the shadows of the oak,
How clung the rowan to the rock,
And through the foliage showed his head,
With narrow leaves and berries red ;
What pines on every mountain sprung,
O'er every dell what birches hung,
In every breeze what aspens shook,
What alders shaded every brook ! ”

Here is another mood, but of the same sort tinged with regret. It is dated “ Ashiestiel,

Ettrick Forest." (Introduction to 'Marmion,'
canto fourth):—

“ Even now it scarcely seems a day,
Since first I tuned this idle lay ;
A task so often thrown aside,
When leisure graver cares denied,
That now, November's dreary gale,
Whose voice inspired my opening tale,
That same November gale once more
Whirls the dry leaves on Yarrow shore.
Their vexed boughs streaming to the sky,
Once more our naked birches sigh,
And Blackhouse heights, and Ettrick Pen,
Have donned their wintry shrouds again :
And mountain dark, and flooded mead,
Bid us forsake the banks of Tweed.
Earlier than wont along the sky,
Mixed with the rack, the snow-mists fly ;
The shepherd who in summer sun,
Had something of our envy won,
As thou with pencil, I with pen,
The features traced of hill and glen ;—
He who, outstretched the livelong day,
At ease among the heath-flowers lay,
Viewed the light clouds with vacant look,
Or slumbered o'er his tattered book,
Or idly busied him to guide
His angle o'er the lessen'd tide ;—
At midnight now, the snowy plain
Finds sterner labour for the swain.”

Oft in my mind such thoughts awake,
By lone Saint Mary's silent lake ;
Thou know'st it well,—nor fen nor sedge,
Pollute the pure lake's crystal edge ;
Abrupt and sheer, the mountains sink
At once upon the level brink ;
And just a trace of silver sand
Marks where the water meets the land.
Far in the mirror, bright and blue,
Each hill's huge outline you may view ;
Shaggy with heath, but lonely bare,
Nor tree, nor bush, nor brake, is there,
Save where, of land, yon slender line
Bears 'thwart the lake the scattered pine.
Yet even this nakedness has power,
And aids the feeling of the hour :
Nor thicket, dell, nor copse you spy,
Where living thing concealed might lie ;
Nor point, retiring, hides a dell,
Where swain, or woodman lone, might dwell ;
There's nothing left to fancy's guess,
You see that all is loneliness :
And silence aids—though the steep hills
Send to the lake a thousand rills ;
In summer tide, so soft they weep,
The sound but lulls the ear asleep ;
Your horse's hoof-tread sounds too rude,
So stilly is the solitude."

This description is even now essentially true,
notwithstanding coaches from east and west, and

that dreadful planting by the margin of the Loch on the Rodono side, which seems intended to show how impervious man can be to nature's grace and charm.

The pictures of St Mary's Loch left by Scott, Wordsworth, and by Hogg also, who has given us an exquisite description, are of its placid mood. Scott indeed has also pictured it in storm, but they have all dwelt on its calm aspect. It is seen hushed to rest amid the hills, whose peaceful shadows lie within its bosom, far down in its quiet depths, as if in a fusion of earth, sky, and water—the whole in an ideal—"a far nether world"—and a more perfect symbol of sympathetic calm cannot be found, where the overlooking hills are face to face with their own forms, in the still responding mirror. But one may on an October day find a very different Yarrow from that of the poets now referred to, and a very different St Mary's. You get to the point on Mount Benger where the Yarrow opens on the vision, or ought to do so; but the day is cloudy, and there is a thickening mist moving in folded wreaths. Going downwards from the hill above the Gordon

Arms, the valley is dimly seen; certain patches of it stand out more markedly than others, suggesting the glimpses of a river flow, wan rather than bright. The hill-tops and higher reaches of the glens are shrouded; you are aware only of the sloping braes on each side of the stream. But towards the Loch the mist lightens, and you find the expanse of water by no means in a quiet mood. It is dark-grey, like the sky, wild, shimmering restlessly, and streaked with foam. The hills do not view themselves to-day in the peaceful mirror, and there may be a swan, but there is no double—a “shadow.” It is now perhaps that one feels the power and suggestiveness of St Mary’s at its greatest. It may be that one’s thoughts, full of troubled Border story,—deeds of violence, blood, and daring,—find in the turmoil of the Loch that the spirit of old times is thus moving, thus imaging itself. It is at least true that the placid St Mary’s of Scott and Wordsworth is a merely one-sided representation of the real,—an idealised picture of a not uncommon aspect. The Loch is not privileged above the human hearts,—that were stirred of old by the

dule of Henderland, the tragedy of the Douglas Burn, where the maiden saw that her lover's blood tinged "the wan water," and the constant alarms of midnight reivers in those adjoining night-shadowed glens,—with an everlasting calm and perpetual sunshine; and when troubled by storm, and its "snow-white sprites" rise and sweep in their power, it is the appropriate symbol of the old life, the old emotions, and the old deeds, appearing almost as if it kept in its bosom, but could not always restrain, the memories of that strife, stirring, and romantic past.

YARROW AND ITS INSCRIBED STONE

YARROW AND ITS INSCRIBED STONE.

THE pedestrian who starts from Selkirk to walk up the Yarrow will find numerous places of interest even in the first nine miles. After crossing the Ettrick and proceeding along its course for a short distance, he reaches the vale of the Yarrow itself, and passes along the line of the battle-field of Philiphaugh:—

“ On Philiphaugh a fray began,
At Harehead Wood it ended;
The Scots out o'er the Grames they ran,
Sae merrily they bended.”

Thence the defeated Montrose, on a September day, rode up and across the bridle-path of Minchmoor, past Wallace's Trench, and then amid the fading heather sped down by the

Fairies' Well to Traquair, where, being in the shadow of fortune, he got but scant welcome. His lot for the future was a fretting of the heart—again, indeed, after a time, to risk and lose all, but never again to strike another brilliant or successful blow for the cause to which he was devoted. A little farther on, on the south bank of the Yarrow, stands Newark, square, massive, grey-lichened, and red-tinted, the castle of the Sheriff of Ettrick Forest, almost encircled by the glittering and restless river; the tower now stricken, riven, and silent, but suggesting to us the old free forest life,—

“With horse and hawk, and horn and hound,”—

when the great demesne around was the wooded and deer-haunted resort of the ancient Stuart kings. Beyond, a little to the south, on the peninsula between the Yarrow and the Ettrick, is Bowhill and the Carterhaugh, where the fairies revelled and pranced of yore, and loving but stout-hearted Janet—alone—seized and tore down from the midst of the troop of riders the young Tamlane as the eerie pageant passed on under the brooding midnight sky. And there,

too, on the opposite side of the Ettrick, is Oakwood Tower, through whose narrow boles Michael Scott's lamp, as people believe, gleamed through the night in the old wizard times. Then on the right-hand bank of the Yarrow, nearly opposite Newark, we have the ruins of Foulshiels, that mark the birthplace in 1771 of Mungo Park, the brave pioneer of African travel and discovery. This stout-hearted son of a line of Border farmers was dashed with the Border fervour and imagination—of the same type as in Leyden and even Walter Scott. With Park, this spirit found its outlet in the dream of the revelations of unknown lands that haunted his fancy and guided and stimulated him to rare personal courage and persistent adventure. The tragic close was found at the rock of Boussa, when, driven within the narrows of the Niger, Park, in presence of outnumbering enemies furnished with pike, javelin, and arrow, elected to throw himself into the foaming river with his friend in his arms; and so the two passed to their rest out of the turmoil of stream and foe.

Then we have Broadmeadows with its noble trees, and its association with Scott's early dream

of acquiring a Border estate; and the Hangingshaw on the brae, recalling the figure of the outlaw Murray,—his state, his pomp, his semi-regal rule, and his company of green-coated riders. Alas now for the old line of the Murrays—the descendants of Archibald de Moravia—of the Ragman Roll of 1296, and their lordships in Yarrow! for Philiphaugh, Newark, Foulshiels, Tinnis, Lewinshope, Sundhope, Deuchar, and other fair hills and hopes, know them no more. Up to the old and picturesque broken bridge of Deuchar the valley of the Yarrow is open, but not bare. It has all along clumps of birk, hazel, and rowan on the hillsides,—remains of the old forest:—

“In Atryk forrest hath my wonnying beyne;
Thar I was born among the schawis scheyne.”

There is mixed with this a good deal of modern planting,—some of it of a commendable sort, and none of it quite so bad as on parts of Tweedside, where apparently the ideal has been afflicting monotony of tree and repulsive ugliness of shape and contour. Once we reach Yarrow Kirk we have “the bare and open

valley," with the glimmering speeding stream breaking onwards amid its resounding stones, with the burns murmuring down through the Hopes of green far-receding pastoral solitude. At this point on the right or north bank of the river as one goes up, and immediately beyond the Kirk, lies the spot now of especial interest to us. Here there spreads out a crescent-shaped haugh or *houm*, stretching from the road by the river to the foot of the northern hills, and known since the time of the 'Minstrelsy' of Walter Scott by the name of "The Dowie Dens." It is now entirely under cultivation. In Sir Walter Scott's time it was a grassy haugh of lint-white bent,—hence probably the name. It was here that he localised the scene of the ballad of "The Dowie Dens." This was the prompting of his ardent realistic feeling,—the yearning of his pictorial imagination for definite place,—that the story might appear more real. We need not object. We can now fill that haugh with the scene. The bit of moorland, as it was in Scott's day, has been glorified in the series of pictures and incidents here localised—as few bare spots of

earth have been. We recall the buckling on her lover of the armour by the sweetheart or young wife; the riding away slowly out from her sight into the dim moorland distance; the unequal conflict—nine to one; the terrible combat and slaughter; his treacherous fall; her lonely wandering and search for the dead; the outburst of passion on finding the body:—


“She kissed his cheek, she kaimed his hair,
As oft she had done afore, O;
She belted him with his noble brand,
And he’s away to Yarrow.

.
O gentle wind that bloweth south,
From where my love repaireth,
Convey a kiss from his dear mouth,
And tell me how he fareth !

.
Gae hame, gae hame, guid-brither John,
And tell your sister Sarah
To come and lift her leafu’ lord;
He’s sleepin’ sound on Yarrow.

.
She kissed his cheek, she kaimed his hair,
She searched his wounds all thorough;
She kissed them till her lips grew red,
On the dowie houms of Yarrow.”

This, in brief, is the old-world story that now




risers upon the imagination, when we look on the spot named "The Dowie Dens."

Now no doubt the action is just as likely to have taken place here as anywhere else in the valley; for it was in the valley, and near the water, and on a "dowie houn," whose sadness was thus emphasised tenfold. But historical accuracy is of some moment, even in dealing with the scenes of old ballads. And in this reference, Sir Walter Scott was the first, so far as I am aware, who specially applied and restricted the name of "The Dowie Dens" to the space of moorland west of Yarrow Kirk. This was hitherto known simply as "The Whitefield"—from its benty grass—and is now known as such to the dwellers on Yarrow. It is the tourist who brings with him "The Dowie Dens." There is no such specification in the ballad itself—"dowie dens," "dowie houms," "bonnie banks," all equally occur and recur in the ballad minstrelsy. But ground for localisation there seems to be none. Sir Walter always desired a locality—to give, as we have said, a deeper impression of real presence to an incident; and this bit of moorland in his day

was especially suggestive of fight, slaughter, and death. The plough and the hand of modern improvement had not yet touched it. The monuments of the past were there, as the hands which mournfully raised them had left them. It was then simply a piece of uneven, rising and falling, land, showing certainly nothing of the shape of "dens" or "deans,"—that is, hollows or ravines,—only a considerable crescent haugh of the river, probably the bottom of an old loch. But it was dotted with at least twenty cairns; it had several standing-stones, near which cists and sepulchral remains were turned up, when the plough was set to work and desecration. I imagine there were even some cromlechs. Sir Walter Scott, with a curious confusion in his mind, or at least lack of discrimination of the prehistoric and the mediæval, set down the slaughter of the lover amid the cairns and the standing-stones of "The Whitefield," and forthwith called it "The Dowie Dens."

The truth, as I apprehend, is this,—that "the dowie dens" of the old ballads refers to the general appearance of the valley, scooped out under the hills—to the pensive and pathetic



look, under a grey sky, even of its green knowes, and much more, of the depths and recesses of its ever-recurring mountain burns. This view is confirmed by the pretty constant recurrence, even alternation, of the parallel phrase, "the dowie houms of Yarrow"—that is, the holms or haughs by the river. Both phrases—"the dowie dens" and "the dowie houms"—must be taken as indicating a general feature of the stream and valley, and not as the names of localities. And though "dowie" may refer emphatically to the sad depressed state of mind arising from tragic incident,—death in combat, disappointment in love,—the feeling indicated fits exactly the impression which the valley gives on certain days under the aspect of the heavens, to a heart of the least susceptibility to the symbolism of outward nature.

But our concern at present is with The Whitefield. The ground slopes into a plain from the west, descending from two hills known as the Swinebraehill and Snouthed. Along the face of the former of these ran from Henhill and Minchmoor the line of the Catrail, ere it dipped into the valley of the river at the Redhawse, and

ascended the hill on the south side on its way to Ettrick and the Cheviots. Distinct traces still remain here on the north side of the Yarrow, as I have ascertained. The Whitefield stretches eastwards for nearly half a mile to the turn of the Whitehope Burn close to the kirk and manse of Yarrow. A low-lying, uneven stretch of land, sloping rather to the east, it is now divided by stone dikes into three or four cultivated fields. It is bounded on the north by the Whitehope Burn, which is joined by the Wurluss Burn, also on the north side. (I have sometimes thought the prefix here is suggestively the old Cymric—*Gwyr*, men.) The southern boundary is now the public road; and immediately south of that flows the Yarrow—originally, no doubt, the sole boundary on this side.

On the slope of the ridge to the western extremity of the Whitefield stands a monument of great and special interest, of a kind very rare in Scotland—the Inscribed Stone of Yarrow. This and three other standing-stones are all that are left us of the ancient monuments of this mysterious haugh by the water.

Of these latter, there is one of about the same size as the Inscribed Stone, somewhat further to the east, in the Mansefield. Its height is 4 feet 10 inches; its greatest breadth, 3 feet 5 inches. Then a stone of lower height close to the Whitehope Burn,—both nearly in the same line. The height is 3 feet; breadth, 2 feet. To the north, near a shepherd's house, is another standing-stone, taller than either of those mentioned: 5 feet 6 inches in height, 2 feet 7 inches in breadth on its oval side. The Inscribed Stone is the only lettered one. This stone as it now stands upright is in height above ground, on the east side, 5 feet; its greatest breadth is 2 feet 11 inches; its least breadth is 1 foot 10 inches. It is a foot in thickness. Its breadth is greatest at the top; it tapers somewhat towards the base. A small portion has been splintered off at the right-hand top, but this seems to have had no lettering. The inscription runs not across the stone, but lengthwise downward to the base. The stone occupies the spot where it was originally found, but when discovered in the beginning of the century it was lying flat

under ground at a depth of 8 inches of soil. It was turned up by the plough about 1803, when the Whitehope was being converted into arable land. Bones and ashes were found under it. "It is thin and flat, quite a contrast to its round lumpish standing companions." It may have formed the cover of a stone coffin, as the late Dr Russell thinks; or it may have been laid over a simple grave, as Dr J. A. Smith suggests; or more likely it was the horizontal slab of a cromlech.

The discovery of the stone was made known at the time to Walter Scott, then busy in the collection of the 'Minstrelsy of the Border.' There thus arose a sort of mythical story of the finding of a carved or ornamented stone, instead of one simply lettered. And this persuasion is hardly yet extinct, but it is wholly groundless. Only one stone was discovered, and that the Inscribed Stone of which we now speak. It happened on this wise. A party of friends—including a young artist or sketcher, George Scott, son of the farmer of Singlee, who afterwards perished in Mungo Park's Niger expedition, and, I think, William Laidlaw—came to visit Mr Ballantine of White-

hope, on whose farm the stone had been found, and to examine it. After a hospitable dinner of the good old farmer type, the party sallied out to the field, and George Scott then and there made a sketch of the stone; but the transfiguring light of the summer afternoon apparently led the artist to see, not Roman letters, but ornaments and zigzag engravings of a rude type. This sketch was sent to Walter Scott, who at once pronounced it "druidical," as having on it symbols of "the sun and moon." But unfortunately for this theory, some keener-eyed people came to detect Latin words on it, and the druidical theory was forthwith exploded. The editor of the 'Minstrelsy' thereupon changed his view, and in the third edition in 1806 referred to the stone as probably recording the incident of the slaughter of "The Dowie Dens," as given in the ballad of that name. He tells us, further, that the person slain was the male ancestor of the Lord Napier of the day. The truth is that this personage—Walter Scott of Thirlestane—fell, not on the Whitefield, but on the Deuchar Swire, on the other side of the river altogether; and it is not at all clear that his death is the slaughter

referred to in "The Dowie Dens." This imaginative sketch of George Scott is the only foundation for the engraving of an ornamental or figured Yarrow stone, still given by certain authorities on sculptured stones.¹

In 1857, at about 30 or 36 feet to the south of the second of the four standing-stones, eight cists were discovered in the course of digging and trenching. They adjoined each other, and each measured some 5 or 6 feet in length. The cists were about the size of ordinary graves, and lay apparently east and west. They were composed of long slabs, and contained traces of bones. In them were found a ring of cannel-coal and a coarse clay urn, unfortunately broken at the time of discovery. A flint arrow-head was found in the neighbourhood of the cists.² Before this date, in 1803, a cairn was removed from the largest of the standing-stones—the most northerly—and under the cairn human bones were found. Near the standing-stones generally, cists and sepulchral remains were discovered. The moor, in fact, has

¹ Cf. Dr Smith's Notes, and Dr Russell's letter there given.

² Dr J. A. Smith, *Soc. Ant.*, 1857; and Dr Russell's 'Reminiscences.'

shown all the evidence of having been a place of burial, either temporarily after a great battle, or permanently as a graveyard.¹

The question arises, What can we make of the lettering on the stone? Does it as a whole, or does any part of it, give us a clue to its date, and to the personages whom it apparently records?

The inscription, running the long way of the stone, consists of six lines, somewhat wavy in their course, but still preserving a sort of parallelism. The letters are rudely carved, almost scratched on the stone, which is not sandstone as Sir Walter Scott supposed, but the hard grey-wacke or Lower Silurian of the district. They are Roman, and of a debased type. Various attempts have been made to read the inscription, from the beginning of the century downwards—none of them with assured success, though certain words, and these of great significance, have been clearly deciphered. I select two of the readings, as apparently approximating at least to the truth.

The first is that by Miss Russell of Ashiestiel,

¹ Cf. Dr Russell's 'Reminiscences of Yarrow'; and Dr J. A. Smith, *Soc. Ant.*, ii. 284, iv. 484, 524.

who has done so much to throw light on our Border antiquities. This is as follows:—

HIC MEMORIA CETI
LOI FINN Q F^{II} PRINCI
PEI· NVDI
DVMNOGENI· HIC IACENT
IN TVMVLO DUO FILII
LIBERALI.

This is the sepulchre of Cetilous and Finn, sons of the chief Nudd, the Dumnonian. Here lie in the barrow two sons of Liberalis.

On the assumption of the reading *Cetiloï*, there has been an ingenious attempt to show that the stone refers to the death of Catlon, whom Oswald of Northumbria defeated and slew at the battle variously known as Denises-burn, Devises-burn, Hefenfelth, and Cats-caul. This took place about 633 or 634 A.D. Catlon is even identified with the famous Ceadwalla, the powerful foe of the Angles. But even if the reading *Cetiloï* were made out, there seems no probability in this reference. It is clear that the site of Oswald's battle and triumph was quite close to the Roman or Hadrian wall. Cats-caul is but another form of *Cad-ys-gual*



—that is, battle at the wall. Further, it is not proved that the commander Catlon who fell was Ceadwalla at all. Ceadwalla was known as Catguollaun, and the ruler who fell in this battle is called by Nennius (sec. 64) Catgublaun, King of Guenedotia (North Wales). Ceadwalla, moreover, was not the son of Nudd, the Dumnonian, nor a Dumnonian at all. His father was Caduan. He really had no connection with the Hael dynasty, distinctly mentioned on the stone. Besides, it is not probable that *Cetiloï* or *Cetilous* could mean Catlon. It would rather represent *Cetel* or *Cadell*, a Welsh name, as we find *Catellus* in the list of British kings far back in Geoffrey of Monmouth's semi-mythic genealogy, and later *Cetel Darnluc* (*Deyrnllwg*), that is, Cetel of the Royal Vale in Cheshire. None of these personages, however, can be shown to have had the slightest connection with Strathclyde or Yarrow, or any of the families therein of the period.

Professor Rhys in the summer of 1891 examined the Yarrow stone, after it had been submitted to a process of cleansing from the lichens which marked it and rendered its letter-

ing almost undecipherable. His reading is as follows:—

HIC MEMORIA LETI
[BE]LLO INTIGNIFIMI PRINCI
PEI · NVdI ·
dVMNOGENI · HIC IACENT
IN TVMVLO dVO FILII
LIBERALI.

Here T is equivalent to S. Thus rendered:—

Here is the memorial of the death of a prince most distinguished in war, Nudus Dumnogenus.

Here lie in the barrow the two sons of Liberalis.¹

The meaning would thus seem to be that the stone is the memorial of the father Nudd, the Dumnonian, and of his two sons—the three having fallen there in battle. Whether, according to the reading of the inscription by Miss Russell, the names of the sons of Nudd are actually given, or whether, according to the view of Professor Rhys, these are not inserted, is of little moment. We have distinctly the reference to the Dumnonian Nudd, and to his family designation “Liberalis.” And we may fairly take the whole as commemorating the

¹ The Academy, August 29, 1891.

death in battle of Nudd Hael or Liberalis and his two sons.

The difficulty and variation in the reading occur after the word *Memoria* and on to *Nudi*. After that the matter is tolerably clear, and we may reach a fairly probable conclusion regarding date and personages.

Memoria is here taken as used for monumental tomb or sepulchre. This is certainly a rare usage; but examples are quoted, one in Roman and several in early Christian times. Thus on a stone coffin at York we have this: "Servilius Troilus se vivo comparavit memoriam sibi et suis. Memoriam posuit." Du Cange gives this as a single instance of this use of the word, but he quotes several examples from Jerome and Augustin of *memoria* for *monumentum*.

Clearly the Yarrow inscription is not Roman. It is later than the Roman occupation. The letters are debased, and one almost suspects that the engraver's knowledge of the inflections of nouns was limited to those of the second declension. Then *hic jacent* is clearly Christian. In classical Latin it would have

been *Dis manibus*, or *Dis manibus sacrum*. There is no evidence of this use of *hic jacet* until the year 365 A.D., when it appears in Rome. This and the cognate phrases *hic pausat*, *hic quiescit*, are in Rome in 365, 371, 376 A.D. They are in Trêves somewhat later. They began to spread over Christianised Europe towards the end of the fifth century. They were gradually superseded by the growingly complex expressions, *Hic requiescit in pace*, *Hic requiescit bonæ memoriæ*, *Hic requiescit in pace bonæ memoriæ*. Then, *In hoc tumulto requiescit*, *In hoc tumulto requiescit bonæ memoriæ*, *In hoc tumulto requiescit in pace bonæ memoriæ*.¹ The Yarrow inscription thus affords internal evidence that it was the work of a period when the old pagan or Roman form was dying out, and the new or Christian form of the fifth century was coming in. It shows, further, that the later or *requiescit* form had not been introduced. This date, as we shall see, corresponds entirely to the epoch of the principal personage whose name appears distinctly on the stone.

¹ Cf. Le Blont, 'Inscriptions Chrétiennes de la Gaule, antérieures au viii. siècle.'

The clearly deciphered words, "Principei Nudi Dumnogeni" and "Duo filii Liberali," give us the key to the date of the stone. We know who Nud or Nudd was. We know the references in "Dumnogeni" and in "Liberali." We can almost explain why those sons of "Liberali" lie here in Yarrow, so near the boundary-line of the old Cymric kingdom of Strathclyde. Ida and his son Ella, after having consolidated Bryneich and Deifr into Northumbria, had pushed their conquests westward far up the Yarrow and the Tweed against the isolated Cymric tribes. Somewhat later, in the middle of the sixth century, arose Riderchen or Rydderch Hael—that is, *Liberalis*, the free-handed, the munificent—the specific name of his dynasty, as *Cæsar*, *Plantagenet*, or *Tudor*. He was head of the Roman, Christianised, or so far civilised party of the Britons. Gwenddoleu was head of the native or pagan party. Gwenddoleu was descended, or at least he claimed to be descended, from Coil Hen (the aged), whose name we still have in Kyle in Ayrshire. Rydderch sprang from Dungual Hen, whose grandfather was of Roman origin. Somehow the Angles

of Lothian and the Picts of the same district are generally found in alliance against the Britons, however badly they may have fought originally among themselves. Both were pagan—the latter apostates. A large proportion of the south-country Britons had also relapsed into paganism. There was now a crisis of social and religious antagonism, and on the field of Arderydd in 573 the two parties fought a bloody and decisive battle in which the Romano-British or Christian side was victorious. Rydderch Hael now became firmly established as King of Strathclyde, as the head of the consolidated states, the strongest British ruler of the day. Gwendoleu had fallen:—

“I have been in the place where was killed Gwenddoleu,
The son of Ceidaw, the pillar of songs,
When the ravens screamed over blood.”¹

Merlin, the friend and minister of Gwenddoleu, had fled to the wilds of Tweedsmuir, the desert of the country, to herd a solitary with the wild beasts in the wood of Caledon; and Kentigern, the friend of Rydderch Hael, was summoned

¹ Book of Caermarthen, xxiii.

from his exile to be the spiritual lord of the country from Alclyde to the Derwent. A great social and religious revolution had been consummated.

Now was the epoch of the dynasty of *Hael* or *Liberalis*. Rydderch Hael was the great-grandson of Dungual Hen, through Clinog and Twdwal Tudclud. But there was also Nudd Hael or Liberalis, a great-grandson of the same Dungual Hen, through Cedig and Senyllt—Cedig being apparently a younger brother of Clinog. Rydderch Hael and Nudd Hael were therefore near kinsmen—united by blood, family traditions, and a common Christian faith. What more likely than that he and his two sons were fighting against the ever-aggressive pagan Angle—on this very border of Strathclyde—and that here he and they fell in patriotic defence of their native state? This Nudd Hael or Liberalis is almost without doubt the person whose name appears on the Yarrow stone, and who probably, along with his two sons, were laid beneath it. He is styled *Dumnogeni*—that is, the Dumnonian, or of the Damnonii, the tribe whom we know from Ptolemy occupied a part

of the central district of the Lowlands—a tribe allied in language and in blood to the Damnonii of Cornwall, certainly of the Cornish variety of the Cymri. “*Liberali*” evidently refers to the same person,—being the family designation. This supposition fits all the circumstances of the case,—the Christian character of the inscription and interment, the position of the stone in the centre of the Christianised part of the district, and on the border where attack was to be met and repelled.

We have at least two distinct references in the oldest legendary and poetical writings to Nudd Hael. When Elidyr Muhanvaur, a man from the north, was slain in Wales, some men from the north, “*Gwyr y Gogledd*,” went to Wales to revenge his death. Among these were Rydderch Hael, son of Twdwal Tudclud—that is, of Clydesdale (or is it not rather Tweed and Clyde?)—Mordaf Hael, son of Servan, and Nudd Hael, son of Senyllt. Nudd Hael was thus living in the last half of the sixth century, for Rydderch Hael died either in 603 or 614 A.D. We have the further record that at the battle of Arderydd in 573, there fought

Dryan, the son of Nudd Hael. We have no independent record of any sons of Nudd Hael, known as Cetil or Cetilous, or as Finn (if this be not Nenn). If Finn is the true reading, we have the same form as the Welsh Gwyn or Gwynn; and, curiously enough, the Welsh mythical hero is Gwynn ap Nudd, or son of Nudd. There are constant references to him in the old Welsh poems. Thus—

“Round-hoofed is my horse, the torment of battle,
Whilst I am called Gwyn, the son of Nudd,
The lover of Creurdilad, the daughter of Lud.”¹

Can this be the tomb of the prototype of the Welsh mythical hero—Gwynn ap Nudd?

What I have now said as to the specific references of this Inscribed Stone, is given merely as a probable solution of the question. It would fix the date of the stone as in the latter part of the sixth or early in the seventh century. This, it may be noted, corresponds pretty closely with the probable date of the Inscribed Stone known as the Catstane of Linlithgow, though Sir James Simpson held that the letters on the Yarrow stone are of a ruder, and therefore pro-

¹ Black Book of Caermarthen, xxxiii.

bably later, date than those on the Catstane. The Yarrow stone, again, resembles "the early so-called Romano-British stones which have been discovered in Wales, belonging apparently to the earlier centuries of the Christian era, from perhaps the fifth to the eighth century."¹ It is especially like the Llanerfyl Inscribed Stone of the fifth or sixth century, but ruder in character.²

The two sons of the Damnonian prince are laid in one tomb, probably along with their father. The tumulus—the tomb—of thirteen centuries ago is within an arrow-cast of the line of the Catrail, which here apparently formed the boundary and the mound of defence between the native Cymri of Strathclyde and the Anglo-Pictish kingdom of Northumbria. Here, where the chief and his sons fell in conflict with their persistent and hereditary enemies, those of their kin who survived raised the lettered stone as an especial distinction to cherish their names and to preserve an inspiring memory for subsequent

¹ Dr J. A. Smith. See *Archæologia Cambrensis*, i. ii., third series, 1885, 1886.

² *Montgomeryshire Collections*, xvi. 91.

generations. We can thus understand how this old battle-field, with its traditions of tribal, even national conflict, and princely death, helped to perpetuate the memory of the Cymric times among their descendants — served thus, long before a deed in Scottish story or in Border warfare had been done, to originate and to swell that tide of sad pathetic reflection and emotion which passed through the hearts, and, fusing with later incidents, issued in the plaintive minstrelsy of the subsequent dwellers in Yarrow.




A DAY'S RAID INTO NORTHUMBERLAND

A DAY'S RAID INTO NORTHUMBERLAND.

FROM the inn at Chollerford Bridge, where the North Tyne sweeps majestically under its overshadowing trees, we start on a breezy July day—the 24th of this month in the year 1890—one of the few summer days of the season. Our equipage is a one-horse trap, and our course is along the Military Way, between the Roman Wall and the Vallum. Our destination is Sewing-shields, nine miles onwards. “Ben” (a collie) and “Spot” (a fox-hound) career in joy when the active mare begins its trot. They are out for a holiday—so are we. Ben, the wretch, treats the pace of the fast-trotting mare as a joke; and actually, ever and anon, jumps a dike, and takes a turn for himself, and hard-

pressed hares cross the road, and dodge under gates. But Ben is more agile and swift than skilful; and he returns satisfied apparently with his *chasse*, perhaps dimly feeling this the surest thing in life. There is joy in the air, for the north-west wind rushes, and sways the heavy-leaved trees ere we get into the bare moorland; and the pearly white clouds overhead speed, gliding on and revealing the broken spaces of the blue sky that overhangs the wide-spreading expanse of varied earth, rising out of the dim Cheviots to the north, and bounded by the Pennine Hills to the west and south-west. Along these nine miles of road the Roman Wall itself has greatly disappeared; but the stout old Vallum—whether contemporaneous or not with the Wall—dug in the ground with its deep facing mounds, has held its place more firmly, in spite of improving plough, with its beneficial results of turnips and potatoes. Recent excavations here and there show the line of the Wall with its mile castles and stations, and at a point a little to the west of our purposed destination is Housesteads, the ancient Borcovicus, whose broken and fallen




columns, pedestals, and green mounds that cover the foundations of once stately edifices—among the oldest accredited remains of the skilled human hand in Britain—tell us of the constructive power of the Roman brain, and the persistent, unbaffled energy of the Roman arm. The grass and the wild flowers which tenderly clothe the ruined strength and grandeur have for us their pathetic lesson. The touching contrast between the past and the present is to be read and felt in these lines:—

“Take these flowers which purple waving,
 On the ruined rampart grew,
 Where, the sons of freedom braving,
 Rome's imperial standards flew.
 Warriors from the breach of danger
 Pluck no longer laurels there ;
 They but yield the passing stranger
 Wild-flower wreaths for Beauty's hair.”

But we are not specially concerned with the Wall at present. Our aim is the sight of another work altogether, the name of which I venture to say few people have ever heard, *The Black Dike*. Yet this may be something even older than anything Roman hands have raised ; and, even if later, of quite a distinct interest for those who care for

what are somewhat contradictorily called the pre-historic problems of Britain.

At length we reach the schoolhouse on the roadside, and proceed quietly up the ascent to Sewingshields farmhouse—close on 1000 feet above sea-level. The house stands on the southern slope of the Sewingshields Crag (1069 feet), the bold dip of which is to the north, and not visible here. But to the south, east, and west there opens one of the most commanding and magnificent views in England. Below, on the south side of the Roman Wall, is seen winding the valley of the gentle Tyne; its wooded banks contrasting with the grass, corn-fields, and moorland which fill up the area of the vast plain around it. West and south beyond runs the dim line of the Pennine Hills, which, forming a natural continuation of the Cheviots, for long severed the early tribes of the north of England,—especially Angles and Cymri. On the far west and south-west rise, grand and grey under the heavens, the long ridge of Skiddaw and the mass of Helvellyn. A soft light is on the earth, white clouds chase each other overhead; gleams of sunshine and



shifting shadows flicker and flit over the ever-varying face of the almost limitless landscape. Verily, that old Mile Castle of Sewingshields, which stood on the crags a little higher up than the present farmhouse—to the north-west on the very verge of the northern cliff—must have been a truly regal outlook,—worthy of the hand and soul of the imperial Roman who built it, and not less of its subsequent associations with the chivalrous King Arthur and his Queen Guinevere.

We now leave trap and pony well housed, and make our way along the edge of the cliff to the highest point, 1069 feet. It is green-mantled all along the southern side and ridge. On the north there is a sheer descent of, it may be, 100 or more feet down the perpendicular basaltic columns,—that stand erect, firm, compact, as giants phalanxed,—facing attack from the wilds that stretch northward to the Cheviots.

But the object of our investigation—the Black Dike—is to the west of these crags; and accordingly we make in this direction for the hollow below. And there, to be sure, we

are rewarded for our pains; for immediately to the west of the boundary-wall of Sewingshields appears the well-cut, well-defined fosse and mound of which we are in quest; and here, too, it is seen to flank an old earthwork, too rude to be Roman. We have now left the Sewingshields Crag a little to the north, and have reached another parallel line of rocks of the same character (rising to 889 feet), which further west get the name of the Hotbank Crag. The Roman Wall and Vallum run on the south side of these crags; and a little to the west is the well-known Borcovicus or Housesteads, already noticed, near the break in the basaltic line of rock known as *Busy Gap*. This was the notorious pass for reivers from north or south—from Scotland or into Scotland—during the troubled Border time of the middle ages, and avoided as dangerous by travellers well down in the eighteenth century.

“Busy Gap,” says the writer of the letter-press connected with Speede’s Map, “is a place infamous for robbing and thieving, and is therefore rather remembered as a cautionary note for such as have cause to travel that way,

than for any proper matter of worth it hath." About the middle of the sixteenth century,—in 1542,—no shepherd or farmer could be got to live on the moorland north of Sewingshields. This was the very highway of raiding and reiving for the "thieves" of Liddesdale and Tynedale, of Gilsland and Bewcastle. Sir Cuthbert Radclyffe, deputy - warden of the East Marches, set two watchmen to stand on the Sewingshields Crag from sunset to sunrise, to take note and give warning of reiving bands. Such was our Borderland three hundred and fifty years ago. Camden, in 1599, dreaded to explore the Roman Wall as far east as Busy Gap, on account of the danger and lawlessness of the district. Yet the spot was barely thirty miles from Newcastle.

Here we find the Dike well marked on the slope of the crag now mentioned. It runs northwards on the west side of the boundary-wall of Sewingshields. The earth has here, as elsewhere in its course, been thrown up on the east side only, and there has been no attempt to form a mound on the west side. At one point here the lateral slope of the mound from

its highest to the lowest point in the fosse was, as measured by me, 23 feet.


But before tracing the Black Dike farther northwards, we must note that here it flanks an earthwork forming its eastern boundary, with which it has evidently been connected. This work is triangular in form, and on the sides not flanked by the fosse has earthen mounds still distinctly visible. Its length from base to apex, which runs a little up the slope of the crag, is, as I walked it, 188 paces, its breadth 163 paces. The breadth of the mound on the north side or base was 27 feet, its lateral slope 10 feet. This earthwork has none of the features of a Roman work. It seems to be that marked "Intrenchments" on the Ordnance Map, and is probably the work referred to by Dr Bruce in his 'Handbook to the Roman Wall' as British.¹ The triangular form is uncommon; I have found only one other complete example of it, near the foot of the Caddroun Water, in Liddesdale.

Leaving this earthwork we follow the line of the Dike or Fosse northwards. Immediately

¹ Handbook, p. 121.

beyond the low-lying moorland, the cutting is not so well defined; but it can be distinctly enough traced as it ascends the soft mossy or peaty ground of the pass between Sewingshields Craggs on the east, surmounted by a heavy stone wall, and a crag fronting Broomlee Loch to the west. The trace is then lost for a little. But towards the top of the knowe, and especially where the ground begins to fall towards the north, it reappears distinctly, still running in the same line on the west of the boundary-wall of Sewingshields, but now beyond the Craggs. Here on the descent of the hill the slope of the eastern lateral mound is from 13 to 14 feet, for several hundreds of yards—perhaps as much as the eighth of a mile—well cut and well defined. This eastern mound faces Broomlee Loch, which we now see lying a little to the east in the hollow of the moorland, and which appears to be about a mile in length and three-quarters of a mile in breadth,—now, in this breezy July day, racing and gleaming under a north-west wind. We may pause in passing and take in this picturesque little scene. To the south, a green margin runs back-

wards until it is lost in the grey face of the Hotbank Crag,—a marked specimen of “crag and tail,” with the crag to the Loch. On the east, rough beetling crags overlook the short slope to the water. On the north rises a heathery knowe where some black cattle are feeding; while overhead certain small birds are sweeping and chirping; and now and again a startled peewit flutters and cries shrill on the breeze,—the only signs of life on this solitary moorland. But even this lonely sheet of water has its legend and its tale of human passion, and in passing it one wondered if the loch still held the mysterious box of treasure said to have been sunk in it ages ago by the old Laird of Sewingshields to spite his successor. The dead hand, they say, has prevailed—because our modern morals are unequal to the breaking of the spell. Still to the west of Broomlee gleamed another lochan of about the same dimensions, called Greenlee Loch, and similar in the character of its surroundings. The old human figures whose hands dug this Dike must have seen and heard those sights and sounds on a similar day more than a thousand, or shall we say two thousand, years ago, as I see



and hear them on this July day. I wonder what they made of them,—how they felt them,—what Nature was to them.

But we must to our Dike again. From this vantage-ground it is still running northwards towards that wide bare country. The breadth here I found to be, from top of eastern mound to margin of fosse on the west, 18 feet. Now a rock, or drum, intervenes, where there is no trace—evidently never was cut there. Sufficient natural defence was to hand. But at the bottom of this slope the Dike reappears, and then goes still northward up the next slope to the top of the wall, always with mound on the east side. Then comes a second line of crag—first after Sewingshields—crag and tail as usual here, called “The Queen’s Crag”; but the blocks of stone are large and square, lying horizontally as you approach them from the south, and then seen to overhang the dip to the north, where the lateral lines rise perpendicular. One magnificent rock stands here isolated, with its legend, of which more anon. At the bottom of this—the Queen’s Crag—the ditch reappears on its northward course, running for about half a mile, until it reaches a

shepherd's house, East Hotbank (852 feet). Meanwhile it has passed near the King's Crag to the east, on the Sewingshields farm. Both King's and Queen's Crag show signs of defensive occupation. Between these crags are remains of tumuli, and there are traces of a circular camp. A little to the east of the Hotbank house there appear traces of a triangular enclosure, somewhat similar to that from which we started, as already described. Distinct traces of the Dike terminate here; and here, too, begins the northern boundary of stone wall of the Sewingshields farm, running eastwards. I followed the probable line of the Dike for a mile or so, but found no further distinct traces. It is said to have gone from this away into the northern wastes towards the north-western boundary of Northumberland—that is, towards the line of the Cheviots at Keildar and the Dead Water—but I could now find no evidence of this.

I have thus far described the northward course of the Dike, I had not time to seek for it southwards of the Wall. But according to the Ordnance Map and Dr Bruce's statement, it seems to have crossed the Roman Wall and Vallum,

going southwards a little to the west of Busy Gap. It then crossed a Roman road west of Grindon Loch, passing on by Whitechapel to the west of Morralelee, as far as Ridley Hall to the south of the South Tyne. There is a plantation to the south of Grindon Loch called the *Black Dike Planting*; the fosse is seen running to the west of this.

In the old maps of Northumberland it is represented as extending from the north-west of Northumberland to the Tyne at Waterhouse, near Bardon Mill; it reappears at Morley [Morralelee] and is said to go by Allenheads [the heads of the Allen Water] into the county of Durham.¹

Dr Bruce adds—

The Dike probably crossed [the Wall] at the opening west of Busy Gap, and as the Wall here is running in a northerly direction, it took the course which the Wall now does as far as the foot of the Sewingshields Crag; it then made off to the northern wastes, passing the Queen's and King's Crag. The Wall has destroyed all trace of it, when the course of the two structures coincided, but there are some remains of it north of Sewingshields Crag. The stone dike which forms the western boundary of the

¹ Handbook, pp. 121, 122.

Sewingshields property probably represents its course (Maclauchlan's Memoir, pp. 37 and 42).¹

The latter part of this statement requires modification. The stone wall in question simply runs along the top of the eastern mound of the Dike, as far north as the boundary extends; but the mound and fosse are now quite distinct, and as I have described them. Further, it is somewhat hypothetical to assume that the Roman Wall has obliterated its traces here, for this would imply that it was dug previously to the date of the Wall,—a point by no means certainly ascertained.

The question arises as to the purpose of this Dike. There can, I think, be little doubt that it was meant as a boundary, and probably a defensive boundary. But if so, it was clearly a defence from the east against tribes on the west. This is obvious from the position of the mound, as thrown up against the west, with the ditch at its feet. If the work was done before the Romans, as Dr Bruce seems to imply, there can be little question that it formed the boundary between the early tribes of the Ottadeni and Gadeni. The

¹ Bruce, Handbook, pp. 121, 122.

former were found by the Romans to occupy the east of what is now Northumberland, also Berwick and East Lothian. Beyond them to the west were the Gadeni, meaning simply dwellers in the forest or Men of the Forest—(Gwddawg). These occupied the central part of Northumbria and the Lowlands, running up through the Cheviots to Roxburgh, Selkirk, and Peebles. The Forest of the Lowes came close to Sewing-shields. This Dike was possibly the line of demarcation between those tribes, at once bounding and defensive; for, doubtless, that eastern slope was palisaded, as all those early works, whether mounds or forts, certainly were.


If it could be proved that the Black Dike ran to the north-westmost point of Northumbria, then there is a suggestion that it had some connection with the *Catrail*.¹ For this would take it right on to the Peel Fell, where the Catrail is known to commence. The statement that the Catrail commences on the Wheel Rig, to the north of the Peel Fell, is, as seems to me, groundless. In this case, the Black Dike might be simply a prolonga-

¹ For an interesting and ingenious paper on the Catrail, see Blackwood's Magazine, November 1888.

tion of the Catrail. But there is now no evidence that the Dike extended so far to the north-west.

If this Dike was of later construction than the time of the Romans, it probably marked the advance of the Angles of Bernicia against the Cymri of the west and Strathclyde. Roughly thus it would correspond to the early boundary between Northumbria and Cumbria. And to this view I am inclined, looking to all the historical probabilities. The Angles to the east meant a continually aggressive advance on the Cymri of the west. The Cymri doubtless often struck back and regained their territory, though in the end they were beaten. And this line of defence may possibly mark a stage when the Angle power reached so far west as Sewingshields and the heads of the Cymric Allen,—a conquest of territory which they found it necessary to indicate and secure.

But it is now five o'clock, and there are signs of the westering shadows. Nothing further can be accomplished this afternoon. So one takes to the deep benty grassy moorland, and makes for Sewingshields farmhouse, rounding to the east by Hemmel Rig, where on the flat stood the medieval



Castle of Sewingshields. Now the Craggs are seen in their northern aspect and their true grandeur. Erect and firm rise the clean-cut basaltic columns in front,—turned like a crescent or mural crown of half a mile to the northern waste. The stately pillars are dark-grey and weather-beaten. Right down perpendicular they run, until the greenery creeping up from the moor meets their base,—clothing the interspaces between the broken and dislocated fragments of rock fallen from the heights. Brackens, ferns of varied kinds, mosses and heather, interspersed with birks and alders, struggle up the cliff as far as they may, as if yearning towards the grim columns, and there resting at their feet lovingly. The westering sun touches the barrier and fuses grey rock and verdure with an unspeakable charm. The perpendicular line of the pillars passing at their base through a growth-bedecked curve is fused with the short grassy moorland. Now to the east we catch a sudden gleam of another sheet of water—Halley Pike Loch,—lying quietly by its own crag; and then taking one of those short cuts which try and perplex our friends, we mount up a steep crag through a tangled bit of

wood, slipping and spurling right over the ruined line of the Wall, and so back to the trap and the pony.

One had now spent some hours—delightful hours alone amid the bent and the brackens—with no companionship except distant moving black cattle, some sheep, some birds, and a peewit now and again; but certainly the peaty sunken rills were dark enough, and not enticing to drink from *per se*. Yet I did not find that the region was so bad as it was described a century or two ago, when it is said:—

It would be impossible for a man to live there even half an hour. Vipers and serpents innumerable, with all other kinds of wild beasts, infest that place; and, what is most strange, the natives affirm, that if any one should pass the Wall he would die immediately, unable to endure the unwholesomeness of the atmosphere. Death also, attacking such beasts as go thither, forthwith destroys them. . . . They say that the souls of men departed are always conducted to this place.¹


How a boding imagination could so darken and forbid those moorlands, so charming in their desolation, solitude, and pathos, for so many

¹ Quoted in Jenkinson's Guide, p. 207.

centuries, is to us almost inconceivable. For these sentences do not indicate an antipathy arising from association with strong and evil doers, but to the very land itself.

And now when the sun is westering, and we are passing the site of the castle north of the Crag, we begin to remember something of the old Arthurian story connected with the spot, and subsequent imaginative myths. Here in their strength those Crag look down on one in this summer evening's glow. It is curious to find how the memory and the myth of Arthur are, as in this instance, associated with the strong and abiding places of nature,—with rock, cavern, and hill. His death was evidently a mystery to the people of his time,—not a death so much as a passing to another stage of being. A mortal who had done so much, either really or mythically, could not perish. His deeds and his personality must needs be immortal. There was a power in the supersensible world that cared for him and would cherish him,—call it the fairy Morgana or any unseen spirit you choose. He was simply withdrawn from men,—concealed appropriately within a strong place of the earth,—lying in a

charmed sleep—he and his knights armoured—within a caverned hall. His life had been a broken one, so far as the final redemption from subjection of his kinsmen was concerned. Their faith and their yearning, not to be suppressed, went out towards him, and they pictured him thus biding the time when he might accomplish the great deliverance. Some believed him housed in the crag of Dinas Emrys, some in the recesses of the Eildons, and some within the strong bars of those pillars of Sewingshields. And naturally enough such should be the dwelling-place of a departed immortal; for to the comparatively feeble diggers of dikes and builders of mounds, those pillared masses symbolised a force of origin to which imagination could set no limits, and before which, therefore, they must bow and worship. In rock and cavern, too, dwelt for them unseen powers,—shadowy but unimpaired through the ages as their habitations themselves; and thus it came to pass that the popular feeling and imagination housed their undying hero and their hope in the strengths of the hills, and committed them in charge to an enchantment which can keep a mortal life immortal, and thus save at



least the heart of the oppressed from despair. Certain it is that here in this land of cliff and crag, running in wave-like lines one after another, in some parts as if a molten sea had been arrested and stricken in its flow, we have spots associated with Arthurian memories—in the Sewingshields Crag themselves—in the pillared King's Chair that once towered on them, but is now destroyed—in the King's Crag, the Queen's Crag, in Keming's Cross on the bleak moorland, and in the medieval castle. All this faith and hope may have been misleading to the old Cymri—never in this form realisable; but to us it is at least symbolical of that ever-enduring force of the human heart which proclaims at once the imperfection of our finite experience, and the yearning for some room in the infinite above and before us. How complete in this respect are the Arthurian romances! After a troubled, broken life—all its turmoils and lack of satisfaction—the actors pass into the dreamful spirit-land of enchantment, or into the care of the tender women of Avalon, where—amid that dim western sea—there lies an unbroken repose.

Here is the old story by which we are forcibly

reminded of an incident connected with the sleep of Arthur and his knights within the secret halls of the Eildons, farther north:—

Immemorial tradition has asserted that King Arthur, his Queen Guenevere, his Court of lords and ladies, and his hounds were enchanted in some cave of the Craggs, or in a hall below the Castle of Sewingshields, and would continue entranced there till some one should first blow a bugle-horn that lay on a table near the entrance of the hall, and then with "the sword of the stone" cut a garter, also placed there beside it. But none had ever heard where the entrance to this enchanted hall was till the farmer at Sewingshields, about fifty years since, was sitting knitting on the ruins of the castle, and his clew fell, and ran downwards through a rush of briars and nettles, as he supposed, into a deep subterranean passage. Full in the faith that the entrance into King Arthur's hall was now discovered, he cleared the briery portals of its weeds and rushes, and entering a vaulted passage, followed in his darkling way the thread of his clew. The floor was infested with toads and lizards, and the dark wings of bats, disturbed by his unhallowed intrusion, flitted fearfully around him. At length his sinking faith was strengthened by a dim distant light, which, as he advanced, grew gradually brighter, till, all at once, he entered a vast and vaulted hall, in the centre of which a fire without fuel, from a broad crevice in

the floor, blazed with a high and lambent flame that showed all the carved walls and fretted roof, and the monarch and his Queen and Court reposing around in a theatre of thrones and costly couches. On the floor, beyond the fire, lay the faithful and deep-toned pack of thirty couple of hounds; and on a table before it the spell-dissolving horn, sword, and garter. The farmer reverently but firmly grasped the sword, and as he drew it leisurely from its rusty scabbard the eyes of the monarch and his courtiers began to open, and they rose till they sat upright. He cut the garter; and as the sword was being slowly sheathed the spell assumed its ancient power, and they all gradually sank to rest; but not before the monarch lifted up his eyes and hands and exclaimed:—

“O, woe betide that evil day,
On which this witless wight was born,
Who drew the sword, the garter cut,
But never blew the bugle-horn!”

Terror brought on loss of memory, and the farmer was unable to give any correct account of his adventure, or to find again the entrance to the enchanted hall.¹

We may note here that the wight who penetrated unsuccessfully into the caverns of the Eildons on the same errand was driven back

¹ From Legends of King Arthur and of Sewingshields, by J. Hardy, in the Local Historian's Table-Book, ii. p. 37.

wrathfully, because he first blew the horn ere he drew the sword—

“ Woe to the coward that ever he was born,
Who did not draw the sword *before* he blew the horn.”

That other adventurer was all right in first drawing the sword, only he failed in not blowing the horn. It is likely enough this complex problem will always fail of solution through the one blunder or the other. And possibly the solution for the modern as for the ancient Celt, will be found in the foregoing of visionary ideals, and the faithful in those matters turning manfully to help themselves.

The King's Crag and Queen's Crag, a little distance to the west, are also associated with Arthur and his Queen. The whole locality lies within the old Y Gogledd or the Cymric North, where there is great probability Arthur, the Guledig, carried on his campaign with the purpose of rescuing his fellow-Britons from the yoke of Pict and Angle. The great block of sandstone to which I have referred at the foot of the Queen's Crag was popularly said to have been pitched by Arthur at the Queen in a fit of offended dignity! Her Majesty was combing her hair. She received

the missile on her comb, and there are the marks on the rock to this day ! It is only about twenty tons !

Sir Walter Scott has used effectively in "Harold the Dauntless" the weird traditions of the Castle, as he calls it, of the Seven Shields. This was no doubt the medieval stronghold to the north of the Crag. It is the scene of the probation of Harold, ere he is to recover from the spiritual lord of Durham the broad lands of his father Witikin, the Waster, by the Tyne and the Wear. He must pass a night in that blood-stained and haunted castle. There is a dread tale connected with it. The Druid Urien once had seven daughters. They had seven kings for suitors — Powis, Wales, Strathclyde, Galloway, Loudon, Dunmail, and Northumbria. But the seven daughters were bent on having but one husband, the gay and fair Adolf of Northumbria. The Arch-fiend was consulted, and this was the advice and result :—

"Ye shall ply these spindles at midnight hour,
And for every spindle shall rise a tower,
Where the right shall be feeble, the wrong shall have
power,
And there shall ye dwell with your paramour.

Beneath the pale moonlight they sate on the wold,
And the rhymes which they chanted must never be
told ;

And as the black wool from the distaff they sped,
With blood from their bosom they moistened the thread.

As light danced the spindles beneath the cold gleam,
The castle arose like the birth of a dream—
The seven towers ascended like mist from the ground,
Seven portals defend them, seven ditches surround.

Within that dread castle seven monarchs were wed,
But six of the seven ere the morning lay dead ;
With their eyes all on fire, and their daggers all red,
Seven damsels surround the Northumbrian's bed."

Adolph, fortified by the saining of the cross,
rose and slew the seven damsels, sealed the gate
of the castle, hung o'er each arch-stone a crown
and a shield, left it, and died an anchorite.
Thus—

"Seven monarchs' wealth in that castle lies stowed,
The foul fiends brood o'er them like raven and toad ;
Whoever shall guesten these chambers within,
From curfew till matins, that treasure shall win."

This was to be Harold's probation, and he accepted it. What met the view of the chieftain and his page within the castle may be learned from these stanzas :—



"As if a bridal there of late had been,
Decked stood the table in each gorgeous hall ;
And yet it was two hundred years, I ween,
Since date of that unhallowed festival.
Flagons, and ewers, and standing cups, were all
Of tarnished gold, or silver nothing clear,
With throne begilt, and canopy of pall,
And tapestry clothed the walls with fragments sear,—
Frail as the spider's web did that rich woof appear.

In every bower, as round a hearse, was hung
A dusky crimson curtain o'er the bed,
And on each couch in ghastly wise were flung
The wasted relics of a monarch dead.
Barbaric ornaments around were spread,
Vests twined with gold, and chains of precious stone,
And golden circlets, meet for monarch's head ;
While grinned, as if in scorn amongst them thrown,
The wearer's fleshless skull, alike with dust bestrown.

For these were they who, drunken with delight,
On pleasure's opiate pillow laid their head,
For whom the bride's shy footstep, slow and light,
Was changed ere morning to the murderer's tread."

How Harold here passed the night, what he
dreamt, how he confronted, fought with, and
overcame Odin, the god of his race and faith,
how he abjured paganism, accepted Christianity,
and married Eivir, who had accompanied him

disguised as Gunnar, his page—are all duly set forth in the *dénouement* of the poem.

Considering all that is suggested by this highly mythic tale of "Harold the Dauntless," it is certainly well that Sir Walter should add a caution against impulsive people supposing that they will find a castle with Seven Shields, or indeed any castle at all. Alas! nowadays there is none. Whatever may have existed has disappeared. Farmers and dike-builders, as usual, have done the business for the foundation of old romance. But Sir Walter puts it very well:—

"No towers are seen
On the wild heath, but those that Fancy builds;
And, save a fosse that tracks the moor with green,
Is nought remains to tell of what may there have been."

And I fear we may also add this, not conducive to belief in the myths,—that Sewingshields is not Seven Shields, but something quite different. *Shields* is certainly *shiels* or *shielings*, as in Scotland. It is the Scandinavian *sciala* (pronounced *shiala*). In Cumberland this has taken the form of *scales*, and in the Lowlands of Scotland *shiels* or *sheilings*. The *d* has crept somehow into the Northumbrian form. We have Shields-on-the-

Wall (old name Sheil - a - Wall) not far away. *Shield* is really *shele*, as we find it printed in the old maps of Northumberland. So we have written *Sewingshele*. Perhaps the Angle word *scyld*, meaning *shelter* or *protection*, is the origin of the affix. This would account for the *d*, hence *shield*; while in Scotland the Scandinavian would suggest simply *shiel*. And I suspect further that *sewing* is not *seven*, and never meant anything of the sort. It is probably, as has been supposed, from the Anglo-Saxon *Scewing*, a high hill.

In the letterpress in connection with Speede's Map of Northumberland occurs the following:—

There is also a martial kind of men which lie out, up and down, in little cottages (called by them *sheals* and *shealings*), from April to August, in scattering fashion, summering (as they call it) their cattle, and these are such a sort of people as were the ancient *Nomades*.

But let the traditions be as they may, we are now safely back at the inn of Chollerford, —neat, clean, simple, and complete, as a country inn ought to be. The shadows are on the long-spreading pool of the Tyne, as it stays by the

bridge, and a mellow gleam is over Tynedale, its trees and its hills, and the old castles of Haughton and Chipchase gain some recognition of their past baronial splendour in the fading western glow. A quiet dinner—some reflection, and then to bed—for to-morrow is to find us treading the moorlands of the sources of the Liddel.

**SIDE-LIGHTS ON THE BATTLES OF
PRESTON AND FALKIRK**



SIDE-LIGHTS ON THE BATTLES OF PRESTON AND FALKIRK.

CHARLES EDWARD had landed at Borrodale in Arisaig in the last week of July 1745. His hopes of support from the French Government had been greatly disappointed, but the enthusiasm and persistent purpose of the man had led to this bold—apparently most hazardous—initial step. The same qualities, joined to considerable sagacity and insight, and great physical endurance, sustained him to the last through many discouragements, led him even to more than one victory, and after the final disaster of Culloden, stood him in good stead in his wanderings and terrible hardships. His standard had been unfurled in the vale of Glenfinnan,

at the head of Loch Shiel—a banner of red silk with a white space in the centre—destined to draw many hearts to it, to evoke much chivalrous devotion, to be identified for a time with heroism and victory, but the precursory symbol of the wreck of many a noble life and the ruin of many an ancient home. Highland clan after clan furnished contingents for the enterprise. At length he found himself strong enough to set out on the march southwards. Sir John Cope was sent with peremptory orders to intercept him. Cope got as far as Dalwhinnie, within sight of Corriearrick, whose summit the Highlanders had already occupied from the other side. Instead, however, of facing the foe, Cope thought it prudent to turn to the right and march on to Inverness, thus leaving the Prince free to continue his march on Edinburgh. In the capital internal dissensions prevailed. There was a struggle for municipal office. The tradesmen of the guilds were much more interested in the question as to who should be Deacon, than in that of who should be King.¹ No proper precautions had been taken to meet the emergency, and Provost

¹ Chambers, *Rebellion*, 1745, vol. i. p. 95.

Stuart and Captain Drummond, of opposite political leanings, did not work in harmony. The result was that no competent force was sent out from the capital to stay the march of the Pretender; and in the end, Lochiel and other chiefs with 900 Highlanders contrived to enter by the Nether Bow Port at five in the morning. The citizens were asleep, and the city was now at their mercy. The valiant Scottish officials of Bench and Bar, to say nothing of municipal and ecclesiastical dignitaries, had almost universally fled. The Highlanders might do as they chose, but here at least they behaved well. The Prince entered Holyrood in the course of the day amid great enthusiasm. He and his army remained in the capital until Cope had returned from Inverness, and was threatening them from Dunbar on the east. On Friday the 20th September the Prince, at the head of his army, set out from Duddingston, where they had bivouacked during the night. Cope was advancing from Dunbar. The Royalist army reached Preston a little after noon. At first Cope drew up his line fronting the west. Finding the Highlanders passing him to the south, he changed his position so as to

front southwards. In the morning of the battle he returned to his first position, with his line, however, facing the east. He had Cockenzie and the sea on his flank to the north. On the south of his line was a boggy morass traversed by a deep ditch or drain, that made for the sea by the east of Seton Castle. The Highlanders lay down for the night in an open stubble-field to the west and south of Cope's position. Towards evening a thick mist or easterly haar settled down on land and sea. The Prince, along with his officers and soldiers, slept under the open heaven in this field of cut pease—a sheaf of pease-straw serving each man for pillow. The attack was to be made in the morning, but the difficulty for the forces of the Prince was how to get across the morass and ditch with safety and without exposure to unreturned fire. A scheme for doing so was brought to Lord George Murray and the Prince, in the early hours of the night, by a son of Anderson of Whitborough, a proprietor in Lothian. It was at once adopted, and it was resolved to follow his guidance through the bog, and attack the Royalists in the early morning. The force began to move about three o'clock, some three hours before sunrise. Fol-

lowing Anderson in dead silence, they stole down the valley that runs through the farm of Ringan Head,—concealed by the darkness of the night, and, as day broke, by the mist. When nearing the morass, they were discovered by an advance-guard of dragoons; but they were able to cross and form on the firm ground on the other side without molestation. Cope was meanwhile riding in hot haste from Cockenzie, where he had been wakened from his sleep. The sun had now risen, and was breaking the mist into cloudy masses that rolled from the Firth on their right to the fields on their left. But neither army could be seen by the other. The line of the Highlanders hastily formed was somewhat irregular, but advance to the attack was at once made. Before they got half-way, the sun had partly dispelled the mist, and displayed the glittering array of the bayonets of the Royalist line. Lochiel and the Camerons led, and pierced impetuously through a fire of cannon and musketry. Nothing could withstand their onset. They met a squadron of dragoons under Colonel Whitney, who panic-struck merely fired a few shots and fled. The famous Colonel Gardiner then

advanced to fill the place of the vanished squadron, but his cavalry too fled in panic and precipitation, much to their leader's grief. In a similar manner Hamilton's dragoons on the left flank turned from the field in terror before the MacDonalds, without, it is said, even firing a shot. The defenceless infantry was thus left to the sweep of the Highland broadsword and the thrust of the dagger. As was their custom, the Highlanders when within range fired one volley of musketry, then threw away their pieces, and, having the broadsword in the right hand and target and dirk in the left, made a torrent-like rush on the opposing line. The gleam of the terrible steel burst through the smoke of the fire. Receiving the thrust of the enemy's bayonet in the target, where it stuck, each man cut down his fronting foe. The assailants were speedily within the opposing line, pushing right and left with sword and dagger. The battle was decided in a few minutes. What followed was mere but terrible carnage,¹—made by broadsword and the scythe-headed pole. Though the number of com-

¹ Compare the accounts of John Home and R. Chambers in their respective *Histories of the Rebellion in 1745*.

batants on either side was not great, yet the sun has rarely shone on any battle-field that presented a more gory or ghastly spectacle than that of Preston on that September Saturday.

Sir John Cope, after in vain trying to rally the dragoons, who had behaved so shamefully, and boggling on horseback amid the lanes of Preston, rode from the field with 400 cavalry. The panic of the day had evidently permeated him, for he never halted until he had put more than twenty miles behind him, and got to Lauder, where he halted for refreshment.¹ Thence he rode to Coldstream, and next day reached Berwick, carrying through the Lowlands like a flying courier the first news of his own defeat.

The following letters were written after the battle, and they contain reports of eye-witnesses. They do not add materially to our information, but they confirm and illustrate points in the ordinary narrative. They are of interest as the resuscitation of the feelings and mood of mind of people who were living at the time, and as citizens eager, even personally anxious, for news of the fight. There are, further, picturesque

¹ Report of Cope's Trial, p. 43.

touches in them of real human interest. The writer of most of them was a Mr James Christie, indicated in one of the letters as of Durie, in Fife. But he was now living at Neidpath Castle, by the Tweed, about a mile from Peebles. The ancient castle had been let to strangers after the sudden death of the second Earl of March in 1731, when his son, afterwards Duke of Queensberry, succeeded. This personage, known as "old Q," preferred the joys of London to the simple pleasures of the scenery of the Tweed. But the castle itself had not as yet been denuded of its furnishing and ancient tapestry, and the old trees of many generations stood round it untouched. It was still a suitable residence for a country gentleman. Mr Christie's neighbour and friend, to whom the letters are addressed, was James Burnett of Barns, an adjoining property, the representative of a very old family which was still in the full enjoyment of its ancestral lands. His descendant had not yet begun to "improve" the estate and the family off the roll of landed gentry. Mr Burnett was, I rather suspect, like a good many others of the Lowland lairds, a Jacobite at heart, though he took no outward

part in the rising. His close correspondent was Mr David Beatt, a teacher of writing in Edinburgh, and an ardent Jacobite, who officially proclaimed King James the VIII., and read the commission of regency in favour of his son Charles, before the palace of Holyrood after the Prince's entrance. The Barns family were evidently in cordial sympathy with Mr Beatt and his views. He continued to correspond with them for several years after Culloden. From one of his letters we learn that he had one interesting pupil in 1747. The heroine, Flora Macdonald, freed from her restraint in London, came to Edinburgh for instruction in penmanship, a part of her education which had apparently been neglected. Mr Beatt excuses himself for not visiting Barns in these words (September 25, 1747):—

As I have enter'd with Miss Flory M'Donald, who waited five weeks for my return to Town, and who needs very much to be advanced in her writing, confines me to daily attendance, and must do so till she is brought some length in it, which obliges me to keep the Town close.

Mr Christie had a son a lieutenant in Colonel

Murray's Regiment, which took part in the battle of Preston. He writes to Mr Burnett the day after the battle, under date "Sunday morning" (22d September), and says:—

A sentinel of Colonel Murray's Regiment, in which my son is lieutenant, is just come to our house [Neidpath], and is a little wounded in the leg. He says that Colonel Gairdner and Captain Leslie in Murray's Regiment are killed, and 'tis said that Cope is killed. Many of the dragoons are killed. Gairdner's Dragoons and the men were not to blame. Their horses being young, and the Highlanders throwing up their plaids, and the sight of their broadswords so frightened them that they threw many of the riders, and killed many of their own foot. Many of the dragoons were also shot. Hamilton's Horse behaved better. My son John, he says, commanded one of the platoons of his own regiment in the rear of his own regiment, and his captain commanded another on the right. My son went off with the remaining part of the dragoons towards Berwick, where it is now said there are six thousand Dutch landed. This man says that they were but three thousand five hundred, and the Highlanders nine or ten thousand. He says they stood within pistol-shot of one another some time, and neither horse nor foot of them had orders to fire one shot, but did it of their own accord, and fired but one. They

have thirteen hundred prisoners, eight cannon, and all the baggage.

John Walker, Lieut. Christie's servant, rode to Neidpath from Preston to inform the father of the disappearance of his son, and of the fruitless search he had made for him on the field (September 23). Walker said that he did not hear that the Dragoons got any orders to fire, but that they did so of their own accord,—some of them five, three, and four times, others only once. There is no account, he says, of Cope.

The following is written September 23—the Monday after the battle. The servant sent out for news about the son has not yet returned, and the father and family are “still in great pain for Johnie.” Some soldiers had come from the battle-field on Saturday to Etlstoun (Eddleston), and on to Peebles on Sunday. One of them, who was in the same regiment and company with young Christie, came up from Peebles to Neidpath Castle on the same day. He reported to the anxious father that the Lieutenant had gone off with the Dragoons, believed to be for Berwick:—

But we are still at an uncertainty about Johnie till John Ker comes back. The young man said that several Highlanders were killed by their comrades, and that the Highlanders still fired, and charged for about two hundred yards, as they (the Highlanders) were approaching them; that he saw Colonel Gairdner fall, and that Lieutenant-Colonel Clayton, their Lieutenant-Colonel, was also killed, and that he saw Captain Leslie fall upon his knee, and there is no certainty about Cope. He seemed to be much surprised when he saw the number of Highlandmen, for he was made believe that they were not above three thousand. The young man said that after their first fire the Highlanders surrounded them, being triple their number, and that the Dragoons fought as well as possibly they could, for their horses threw many of them, and killed them and several of their foot; and after the Dragoons had gone a little off, three or four troops of them returned, but when they were again attacked, the men were not to be blamed, for they could by no means get their horses kept in nor to hand, so went off the best way they could.

A gentleman who saw the battle says that Cope's army fired twice before we came off, and that Cope's men fired too soon without orders, for their officers had discharged them to fire till they thought it a proper time. This is all I can learn.

The excuse here about the rawness of the

horses may pass for what it is worth; but the other statements in both letters about the numbers of the Prince's forces are gross exaggerations. According to trustworthy authority, the whole troops under his command amounted to 2400. Of these only about 1456 were actually engaged in the battle. Cope's army reached 2100, but the whole were not in action.

Three days after the battle we have further news about it. Mr Christie, anxious about his son, had sent a servant, John Ker, to Edinburgh, to ascertain, if possible, certain tidings regarding him. Mr Christie writes to Mr Burnett (Tuesday, 24th September 1745), giving these interesting particulars about the battle:—

My servant, John Ker, came here from Edinburgh betwixt five and six last night (Monday, 23d September). He brought me a letter from a gentleman there, who writes me that he spake with one Doctor Hepburn, who spoke with my son and Generall Folk [Fowke], when they had got safe about a mile from the field of battle,¹ and that Hepburn was very well acquainted with my son, and rode a mile with them towards Dunbar, where they say he is at present safe and not wounded.

¹ Corroborated in Cope's Trial, p. 73.

This makes us a little more easie. My son's servant went off about six this morning from this [Neid-path] towards Dunbar and Berwick in quest of his master. The gentleman writes me that on Saturday morning the two armies met near Preston, just by Colonel Gairdner's house, where, after a fight of about twenty minutes, the Highlanders got the most compleat victory ever was heard of. They did not lose 30 men, and they killed many officers and 300 soldiers and took 1200 prisoners, and amongst the killed are Captain Rogers and Captain Stewart of Phisgill, besides those that I have already named to you in the inclosed, and the Master of Torphichan is much wounded.

Public means of communication through the country there seems to have been none—at least to such an outlying district as Peeblesshire. People resident there had to look to exceptional and accidental sources for news. "Our lasses," Mr Christie tells us, were at Peebles yesterday (September 26), where they learned from

a gentleman from Edinburgh that all is quiet there, and the officers who are prisoners are going in the street on their parole, and that the Prince should have said that he was ready to forgive all the gentlemen, clergymen, and others who took arms

against him as volunteers, providing they would beg his pardon, and do so no more; and that they were carrying up what they wanted to the Castle, and no opposition made by the P. [Prince] or the Highlanders. A great many more Highlanders are expected, and hundreds of them coming in every day.

Mr Christie heard in a day or two, by express from Lady Cranston, that his son the lieutenant, and her son George, in the same regiment, were well at Berwick.

The Prince at length, after his gay sojourn in Holyrood, resolved to march south on London. It was a daring enterprise, and, with the materials at his command, most hazardous. Still it was quite in the line of his temper and the mood which had led him to the advance on Edinburgh and to victory at Preston. The Highland forces proceeded to England in three divisions. On the evening of Friday, 1st November, a portion under the Marquis of Tullibardine set out from Dalkeith for Peebles. Their design was to march up the Tweed to Moffat, so as to reach Carlisle. The contingent under the Prince made for Lauderdale, and the third division went by Galashiels, Selkirk, Hawick, and MossPaul.

The western division under Tullibardine arrived at Peebles on the evening of Saturday, 2d November:—

The sun was setting as the first lines devolved from the hills which environ the place on every side, and throwing back a thousand threatening glances from the arms of the moving band, caused inexpressible alarm among the peaceful townsmen, who had only heard enough about the insurrection and its agents to make them fear the worst from such a visit. "There's the Hielantmen! there's the Hielantmen!" burst from every mouth, and was communicated like wildfire through the town.

The "Hielantmen," however, behaved, on the whole, very well. The leader certainly imperatively demanded payment of the cess, but asked from the householders only such a contribution of provisions as they could afford. The citizens were, however, forced to bake and kirk, and the miller was compelled to set his mill agoing on the Sunday, for the needs of the troops.¹ The mere exaction of food was comparatively nothing, but the burghers were thus compelled to break the fourth commandment!

On leaving Peebles, this western division went

¹ R. Chambers, *Rebellion*, 1745, vol. i. p. 210.

up the Tweed valley by Stobo and Tweedsmuir. A detachment of it, according to what seems a well-founded tradition, took the route by Traquair and crossed the hills to Yarrow, making their way to Moffat by St Mary's Loch and Moffatdale. Possibly the Highlanders had become aware of the fact that one laird near Peebles, who had been requisitioned for supplies, had sent his horses and cattle for safety to the seclusion of Meggatdale, which lay on their way. There was but one Jacobite residing in the parish of Stobo at the time. All the other people, fearing the Highlanders, had withdrawn, and hidden their horses and cows. This solitary believer in the Pretender disdained to put his cow out of the line of their march. The result was, that notwithstanding his belief in the trustworthiness and lofty motives of the band, his cow was carried off by them—the solitary trophy from the parish of Stobo. Sir David Murray of Hillhouse, where Stobo Castle now stands, was, however, to be later one of the most marked sufferers from his devotion to the rebels, saving his head, but losing his fine estate.

Some weeks after this, disquieting rumours

were in Peebles to the effect that the report of guns apparently firing from the Castle in Edinburgh had been heard in the town. But a messenger — James Nicholson — who was in Edinburgh (1st December), says there was no ground for the statement. Three to four thousand Highlanders are reported as being at Perth. This was probably the contingent under Lord Strathallan, who did not succeed in getting south to join the Prince on his march to England. This failure led in great measure to the abandonment of the final stroke of the enterprise when only ninety-four miles from London.

The Prince was now on his way back from Derby, having managed to evade the Duke of Cumberland in the retreat—except on the one occasion when Lord George Murray, turning on the pursuers, made his bold back-stroke, and put a party of the assailants to flight. The Prince was making for the north to recruit his somewhat shattered following. Under date December 24, Mr Christie writes to Mr Burnett—

As the Provost of Peebles got a letter last night (23d) from the Prince's army acquainting him that they were to be at Peebles to-morrow, and desired

that the town might have provisions ready for them, you will therefore excuse us if we don't wait upon you to dinner to-morrow, for we cannot leave our house.

The Highlanders do not seem, however, to have turned up on that date, as on December 25th Provost Alexander of Peebles writes that—

The Highland army was yesternight at Lamington, and where they go is not well known. The foot were yesternight at Linlithgow; the horse rode back from Haddington to Edinburgh. Carlisle is besieged by the Duke of Cumberland, and briskly defended by the garrison.

The destination of the division of the forces at Lamington seems to have been changed: there is no evidence of their having turned aside to Peebles.

The battle of Falkirk was fought on the 17th January 1746 (old style, or 28th new). The various features of it are well known. We have the negligence of General Hawley, arising from his contempt, constantly expressed, for the Highlanders and their mode of warfare. He breakfasted and spent the forenoon with Lady Kilmar-

nock, away from his troops. Thus we find him partly taken by surprise as Cope was, and there was the repetition in great measure of the sudden and shameful flight of the Dragoons as at Preston. The Highlanders properly claimed the battle, though the momentary uncertainty of the issue, and the valiant stand of a portion of the Royal forces, prevented them following it up as they might have done.

The following letter is of interest as from an eye-witness. It gives a clear and succinct account of the sharp brief struggle, and helps us to settle one or two points somewhat in doubt. It is dated Edinburgh, 23d January, but bears no signature. It was probably sent, in the first instance, to Mrs Burnett, Barns himself apparently being from home:—

[*To Mrs Burnett of Barns.*]

MADAM,—When your last came to hand I happened to be at Falkirk out of curiosity to see both armies and the engagement, if any should happen; and as the accounts in the newspapers are very lame and in some things false, I shall give you a short account of the action, as near the truth and to the best of my memory, in the great hurry and confusion most people, as well as myself, were then in.

I came from Borrowstoness upon the Friday morning to Falkirk, about 8 o'clock, and saw the forces belonging to the Government regularly encamped upon the north side of the town. About ten of the clock the Highland army was seen upon the south side of the Torewood with colours flying, and seemed as if they had been marching backwards, but about 2 hours after they were espied by glasses, upon the low ground, having taken a circuit round the high part of the wood, and were then marching on the straight post-road towards Falkirk. General Hawley had many informations of their approach, but could not be prevailed upon to march out of his camp till about 2 of the afternoon, when the last account came, as he was sitting at dinner in the town, and when he rose in great haste, saying, "Come, let us disperse this mob." The alarm had been given in the camp some time before, and the men were all under arms, and about half an hour after two they all marched out of the camp, and were forming the line of battle fronting to the west. Expecting the Highland army to come that way, but perceiving that the Highlanders took their route more southerly, they, viz. the King's army, faced about and marched in great haste up the hill to the south-west of Falkirk, and formed the line of battle upon the summit fronting southwards. By this time the Highlanders were likewise forming upon another summit, within a good musket-shot; but neither of the armys were fully formed, when Gardener's and Hamilton's Dragoons began the battle

by falling in amongst the Highlanders. A tempest of wind and rain blowing incessantly at that instant, that no body could either see or almost keep their feet, and a regiment of foot, said to be Poulteney's, finding that the fire came from that quarter, and not perceiving that the Dragoons were betwixt them and the Highlanders, kept a running fire did more harm to the Dragoons than the enemy. And in an instant of time the Horse broke and put their own left wing in great disorder. I was unluckily situate behind the centre of the army, and was almost trode down by the flying Dragoons and horses wanting riders. I happened to be standing on foot with my horse in my hand at the time, not being able to keep my horse back with the storm; and before I could retreat about a hundred paces, to be further from the shot which was whistling about my ears, the Foot were broke, and many of them at Falkirk before me, some with arms, some none. I stopt about a quarter of a mile to the eastward of Falkirk opposite to the Callendar House, being informed that General Husk had rallied two regiments of foot and was making a gallant stand, and men on horseback were sent off to recall the flyers, but to no purpose, for neither horse nor foot would return. The Highlanders, who were advancing disorderly, seeing Husk's men draw up in order, immediately retreated to their first ground and formed themselves in order for second attack; but General Husk, not being reinforced, marched down the hill, keeping a retreating fire all the while, which

retarded the Highlanders from advancing very much, and saved the most part of the army from being cut to pieces, and gave time to carry off 3 of the smallest of the train of artillery, a great deal of the baggage, and some of the tents from the camp; and what they could not carry off they set fire to, but the tents being wet did not consume so suddenly but that the Highlanders, who were close upon them, extinguished a great deal of the tents and got some baggage. The drivers, upon seeing the army fly down the hill, cut off the draught-horses from the artillery and covered waggons, and rode clear off with them, which was the occasion of 7 of their best pieces being left behind, which fell in the Highlanders' hands.

The flying army were some of them at Edinburgh that same night before 8. But most of the Dragoons and foot stopt at Linlithgow, and came next day to Edinburgh. I can give you no particular accounts either of the killed, wounded, or prisoners, so that you may expect that afterwards with more certainty.

Some of the foremost and heaviest of the artillery were embogued [stuck in a bog or moss], and none of them ever got up the hill to the field of battle.

Since writing the above, I am informed that the Highlanders have about 700 prisoners, of which 200 militia, and amongst them 5 ministers, who, mistaking their trade, had taken the sword of the flesh instead of that of the spirite. There are likewise 30 of the Argileshire Campbels prisoners; the others are all military.

The French Brigades keep their outguards at Linlithgow, and the military at Corstorphin, so that there is but 10 miles betwixt them. The main body of the Highlanders lye at Falkirk, Bannockburn, and Stirling, and are bombarding the Castle strenuously, and flatter themselves that they shall soon carry it; after which they give out they are to attempt this place, where the main body of the military lye.

There are constant desertions from them here to the Highlanders, notwithstanding the strict discipline kept here, for they are constantly whipping them for the loss of their arms and accoutrements, and this day they hung up four for desertion in the Grassmercate, and it's said as many more will be hanged to-morrow in the same place, and 7 more in chains at the Gallolee. You may transmit this to Barns, after you peruse it. This is wrote in great haste, which you will excuse.

General Hawley's one dominating idea was that the rude Highlanders were to be dispersed by dragoons. Hence the order to them—some 700 or 800 in all—to charge a whole army of 8000 foot drawn up in two lines. This was a fatal blunder in tactics; but it appears further, from the letter now printed, that the order was precipitately given, ere either of the armies was fully formed, or the movements and position of the Dragoons were properly known even on their own side.

This was the last success of the Prince. We know what rapidly followed,—the march to the north; the futile siege of Stirling Castle by the way; the stand made on the plain of Culloden, and the disaster of that dreadful day. The Pretender episode was the last rising in arms in Britain that was inspired by the ideas of abstract justice, the divine hereditary right of kings, personal loyalty to a head or chief, disinterested risk and sacrifice, in many cases at least, of life and estate. The spirit of chivalry was its redeeming feature. This was confronted with a strong democratic belief in representative government as opposed to personal rule, attachment to the Protestant succession, and the contentment which was gradually springing up from a state of settled trade and commerce. Hence, though the issue of the contest, as it turned out, was for the best, it did not deeply stir the national heart; and we find the spirit of ballad and song, the power of the imaginative ideal, sympathy for its hero, as the inheritor of “the old Scottish glory,” nearly wholly on the side of the down-trodden cause.



MR GLADSTONE'S ANCESTORS



MR GLADSTONE'S ANCESTORS:
THE GLEDSTANES OF GLEDSTANES AND COKLAW.

A CHAPTER IN OLD SCOTTISH STORY.


THE small, yet ancient and picturesque town of Biggar lies in the Upper Ward of Lanarkshire. It is some three miles eastward from the main valley of the Clyde. But it has a stream of its own—the Biggar Burn—which afterwards rises to the dignity of the Biggar Water; and to the west and south of the town, Tinto and Culter Fell throw grand shadows, towards the afternoon, over the otherwise flat and uninteresting haughs. Biggar has grown up through the centuries under the protection of the Lords Fleming, and their towers of Boghall. In itself

and its surroundings it has many interesting associations with old story. Near it is Biggar Moss, where, as Blind Harry tells us in a picturesque way, Wallace put to rout "the reyffar King," as he scornfully and defiantly called him,—the hated Edward. We need not meanwhile disturb the old tradition. There is the ancient Pass of Corscryne by which the broken English host fled southwards to Birkhill and the Solway. The faces of old warriors and the scenes of old battles are about us in a way tempting us to tarry over the past. But we have no time to-day for this. It is the 2d of January 1880; the day is short, the sky is grey, and we have a long walk before us. So, turning our back on the railway station and the heights of Culter Fell and Cardon, we make our way northwards for the line of the Biggar Burn; we pass through the head of the town and up the hill by the burn-side. We pause but for a moment by the wall of the ancient church, with its quaint Gothic exterior and its pointed Romanesque windows. It dates from the turmoil of the period immediately before the Reformation, and it recalls the earnest but shortsighted and fruitless efforts of the Lords

Fleming to arrest the upbreaking of the ancient faith by finely wrought building and new ecclesiastical endowments. For many more centuries than the present Church has stood, the townsfolk and burgesses of Biggar have been laid in the surrounding churchyard. And in it there is a spot set apart to a name in which we take an interest, and into whose history we are now inquiring. There we find lying several generations of men who bore the name of *Gledstanes*, *Gladstones*, and finally *Gladstone*. The first of the name was laid in Biggar churchyard in 1756. Before that period the Gledstanes had been buried in the churchyard of Libberton, then a moorland parish to the north of Biggar. The change of burying-place indicated a change in the fortunes of the family. When they buried in Libberton, they were laid there as the lairds of The Gledstanes—as Gledstanes of that ilk—and latterly as the lairds of Arthursiel in the same parish, and they were consigned with all the reverence of privacy to their own aisle. But since 1756 they have been laid in Biggar churchyard simply as honest tradesmen and burgesses of the town are laid—in the piece of ground set

apart for them among their neighbours and equals in the daily life of the place. The men whose dust lies here thus belong to a family to which a great interest attaches, not only from the striking vicissitudes of fortune which it has undergone, but also for the part which its members have played in local, especially Border story, for its restoration in our times to its original landed position, above all, for the power which one of its members in our own day has had, and still has, in moulding the policy and the destinies of the British nation. For the great-grandson of the Gladstones who was first laid in Biggar churchyard is the statesman and scholar — William Ewart Gladstone.

Let us go on now to see the original seat of this ancient and stalwart line, and let us look for a little at the story of the race. We leave the churchyard to the right and proceed northwards, following for the most part the line of the Biggar Burn. We leave Cambus-Wallace, and go on through the Carwood. Still ascending, we come to the pastoral uplands of Muirlee. We go on past Castlelochy, and then reach the Bell Craig, 1005 feet above the sea. Here the road



descends, passes across a streamlet, and on the rising knowes on the opposite side we first see the object of our walk and interest—the two Gledstanes, Wester and Easter. It was on that knowe lying below us, known as Easter Gledstanes, that the family named of that ilk had its original seat; it was there they lived in very early times and for several generations, and it was from that spot they came forth to add to the deeds—many of them valiant, some of them dark enough—of Border story.

Looking down and around from the Bell Craig, let us note the surroundings of The Gledstanes. In the small valley on this side a streamlet or syke makes its way as a feeder to a burn which flows northward to the valley of the South Medwyn now before us, and joins it ere it fuses with the North Medwyn, and the united stream makes its way to the Clyde. This burn has its source in a long hill to our right, which slopes upwards to the north, rises to a height of more than 1000 feet, and is named Coklaw. The burn is the Ghyll Burn, showing that the Scandinavians, who left a good sprinkling of their names along the head-waters of the Tweed

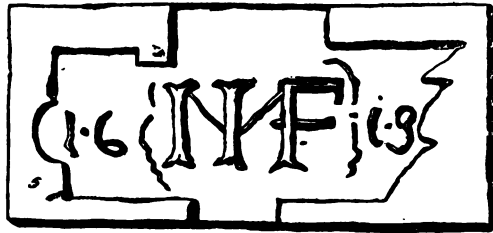
and the Clyde, reached as far as the valley of the Medwyn and its tributary glens.

The surrounding outlook over earth and sky is of the widest and finest kind—thoroughly characteristic of a Lowland, even a Border landscape. There is no far prospect to the west; only the Bell Craig, now wooded in the usual conventional manner of the south of Scotland, with the hardiest and the cheapest firs—monotonous and crowded. But to the east nature is pure, intact, and grand. The Black Mount, heather-covered to the top, and surrounded by two or three heights, rises to about 1700 feet—a massive and shapely hill. Boreland Hill is to the north; the Medwyn Water flanks it in that direction with its pastoral and solitary valley; and on the other side of the stream Dunsyre Hill, with its white pointed top, gives a distinct and picturesque impression in relief. Other lower hills flow along the north side of the valley of the Medwyn, accompany it, and sink with it, as it tends to its fall in the haugh of the Clyde. The plough has now told on the knowes and valleys, and the natural pasture lands only recover their verdure after

being torn up, sown, and cropped; but there is still a distinctive pastoral feeling in the region. The sheep dot the knowes, and in the olden time, and not very long ago, these heights of the Gledstanes and Coklaw would have seemed a typical specimen of the secluded and pathetic uplands which form the true heart of the Border Land of Scotland. But we make a slight descent, cross the valley, and we are at the Gledstanes. And what are the Gledstanes now? Wester Gledstanes, which stands a few hundred yards from Easter Gledstanes, is an old abandoned farmhouse, with a line of outhouses and cottages adjoining. Easter Gledstanes is a new farmhouse with good capacious byres, on the best principles for rearing and fattening cattle—suggesting modern markets and their demands. Both farms are now the property of the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge; and the directors are obviously careful of the farmer and the nowt. But there is no mistaking the old fashion of the surroundings. There is the avenue which led to the castle, and of which one side at least retains its grand old trees—chiefly ashes, as

fine as are to be seen anywhere in the country. There are lines of green mounds marking the boundaries of parks or squares, skirted also by stately trees—elms and planes, as well as ashes. They are about nine hundred feet above sea-level, yet rise magnificently to the heavens. The ancient castle or peel-tower which stood in a square of trees in front of the modern farmhouse has wholly disappeared. Only its green mounds remain, facing the small burn which, as was wont, determined its site. But recently was the last or ground arched roof of the tower cleared away; and so fast were its stones knit together by the old mortar, that two or three charges of dynamite were required to blast it into pieces—an application of the discoveries of modern science for which of course we ought to be duly thankful. Its various coloured stones—telling of old volcanic forces in the Pentlands and regions immediately to the south—now make a curious and picturesque mosaic in the ox-stalls required by modern farming wants. But let us be just to the destroyers, or rather, I believe, to the

architect acting under their instructions. The old tower had for a lintel above a window or doorway—I am not sure which—a curious stone, with carving and a monogram. This has been carefully preserved and placed in the wall of a new stable. Thus I represent it:—



This 1619 indicates a date too modern for the Gledstanes. The I M represents, I think, John Menzies, of Culterallers, who had succeeded the Menzies to whom the Gledstanes disposed of the property some time before.


Then there is another relique, which was got in the low cattle vault of the tower. This, too, is built into the wall of the modern byres. It is evidently the lower part of a handmill for corn. A more recent relique there still is. We have a stone lintel with indented letters,

now built into one of the byres, with the inscription :—

17 G. R. K. M. 78

Who these were it is hard to say, though I was told the letters could once be truthfully read.

Well, here, in this high bleak moorland, as it then was, we find the first mention of the name of *Gledestane*, or *Gledstanes* as it was afterwards commonly written. Herbert de Gledestane appears on the Ragman Roll of 1296 as one of the lairds who swore fealty to Edward I. The origin of the name is obvious. It is the *gled* or *glede*, the old Angle or Scotch for *hawk* or *falcon*, and *stane* is for *stone* or *rock*. There may have been some spot where Wester or Easter Gledstanes now stands once known by the name of the *Gled's stane*. But we have only to look a little to the south-west, where Bell Craig rises to upwards of a thousand feet, to see where of old the *gled* would find his resting-place, whither he would retire with his prey, and where too of a morning he would tell of the dawn, and rouse



the inmates of the dwellings. As Gawain Douglas puts it :—

“ Fast by my chalmir in heych wisnit trees
The soir gled quhisles loud with mony ane pew,
Quhairby the day was dawn weil I knew.”

Originally apparently *Gledestane* or *Gledstane*, the name very soon came to be written *Gledstanes*, *Gledstaines*, *Gladstanes*, *Gladstones*. Finally it has become, what must be pronounced to be a meaningless form, *Gladstone*.

Nearly fifty years pass on, over the struggles of Wallace and Bruce, and the Gledstane is still at the head of the Ghyll Burn. In the time of David II. the family add to their landed possessions. Now they get lands in the valley of the Eddlestane Water, about a mile from the town of Peebles, and some twenty miles south-east of the Ghyll Burn. They had evidently been of use to the king. After David's defeat and capture at Neville's Cross (1346), there were negotiations regarding the transfer to England of the shires of Roxburgh, Selkirk, Tweeddale, and Lauderdale. Umphraville, Percy, and Neville were the English Commissioners; the abbots of Melrose, Jedburgh, Dryburgh, and several laymen, including Patrick

and William of Gledstanes, acted for Scotland. In 1365, after David's return to Scotland, he granted to William of Gledstanes, the son and heir to William of Gledstanes, knight, deceased, the lands of Wopdgrenynton. These lands can still be identified. They were then pleasant slopes and meadow lands near and around the old religious house of Chapelhill, which stood amid its orchards, watered by the Eddlestone.

This was apparently the first addition to the fortunes of the laird of Gledstanes. But another was soon to follow. One John Trumble [Turnbull] held the lands of Hundleshope, "the hungry, hungry Hundleshope" of the old picturesque rhyme. For the haugh lands were then under water—in fact, a loch—and the hills and glens now to be prized for their stern and savage beauty, their alpine recesses, and their autumn glow of heather, were perhaps looked at, in the "days of cattle and corn," as but a bare possession. Yet old Hundleshope has a fine ring about it—of the sound of the horn and the tongue of the hound; for it is in its earliest form the Houndwallshope, or the Hope of the Hound's Well. And in those far-back days its heights

and its wild glens would be the hardest hunting-ground, the best refuge for deer and boar and wolf which even the grand hills around afforded.

John Trumble got the lands of Hundleshope from David II., between 1329 and 1371. Obviously he had come across from the old Turnbull country of Bedrule. Margaret, John's daughter, only child and heiress, was wooed and won by William Gledstanes of Gledstanes. Matters had been fitly arranged by John Trumble and young Gledstanes in the old quaint fortalice of Hundleshope—now long passed away. In due time there came a son, John Gledstanes; and finally Margaret, his mother, resigned to him in her lifetime the lands of Hundleshope, which she had inherited from her father. These lands were duly conveyed to the son by a charter of Robert III., somewhere between 1390 and 1406. It was probably after 1390, as William Gledstanes, presumably the husband, was then living, and appears as signatory to a charter of Robert III. of date 1391.

But Margaret Trumble was destined to bring to the Gledstanes another territorial connection. She had property in Teviotdale. In her lifetime,

and still in the reign of Robert III., she further resigned to this fortunate son John Gledstanes (called apparently after old John Trumble, her father) certain other lands, which she inherited in the parish of Robertson, by the Borthwick Water, not far from Branksome, and also lands in the town of Selkirk. About the same time the Gledstanes seem to have got lands in the neighbourhood of Hawick, in the valley of the Slitrig and parish of Cavers. These were probably also part of the heritage of Margaret Trumble. They consisted of Ormiston, Orchard, and Hummel-knowes, lying to the south-east of the town of Hawick. They were held by feudal tenure from the great Border house of Douglas. One is led to think of Margaret Gledstanes as a sweet, gentle woman, and as a kind and loving mother, thus to treat her son. She did for him all that she could, and what she thought was kindest and best. Here was a lucky chance for a lad to make his way in the world—for a laird to become a lord—and adding gradually, as he now might have done, to his possessions, to become a territorial magnate, like Scott of Buccleuch, whose prospects at this time were by no means so great. But



somehow or other the tide was missed, and Margaret Trumble's son does not seem to have advanced in this line. Rather, after this he was more in Teviotdale, where his possessions were comparatively small, than in the Upper Ward and Tweeddale, where his estates were considerable. Perhaps there was an impetuous temper in the family, which preferred the constant fervours of the Border raids to the comparatively unfrequent intrusions on Upper Tweeddale. The Gledstones certainly after this period are heard of more in the neighbourhood of Hawick than in their original district.

We come now to a curious incident in the history of the family. There is an historical fact tolerably well ascertained, known as the Siege of Coklaw. In 1403 the Earl of Northumberland and his son Hotspur followed Earl Douglas, who had ravaged Northumberland with a band of Scots, and caught them, as they were making their way back to Scotland, on the rugged slope of Homildon Hill, above Wooler. A night more, and Douglas and the Scots would have been high up on the Cheviots, by the head of the Kale Water, where the Percies would have found it

hard to deal with them, or even to catch them. But, as fate would have it, the tired Scots encamped on the southern slope of Homildon Hill, amid broken and rugged ground, with the heights of the Cheviots to their back, which cut off all chance of retreat in case of disaster.

Douglas and the Scots were badly beaten. The mound down on the rough road to Homildon shows where the hardest of the fight took place, and where Scotch and English men lie buried. Douglas was made prisoner; and Henry IV., in pursuance of the traditional Edwardian policy of asserting feudal rights over Scotland, gave to the Earl of Northumberland a grant of the whole Douglas territory in Teviotdale. This sort of present was, of course, rather of a doubtful character. It was easy to offer, but not so easy to take. But the Percies had deeper designs than Henry himself surmised. They had aims at the crown of England itself. They did not thus care so much for the possession of the Douglas lands as for the possession of the person and goodwill of the Douglas himself. Accordingly, they sought and succeeded in concerting an alliance with Douglas while in captivity, to help them to dis-

possess Henry, and secure the crown of England for their family. But, in obedience to Henry's orders, and as a formal taking possession of the lands of Douglas, they marched for a day into Scotland, into the heart of the territory of Douglas in Teviotdale, and laid siege to the somewhat insignificant tower of Coklaw. This was on the lands of Ormiston. It was the property of the feudal vassal of Douglas—Gledstanes of Gledstanes and Coklaw. The Percies lay before this tower for some time. They battered it in a listless sort of way, and after some days they retired to England, with articles of agreement that it was to be delivered up after so many weeks. The whole movement was a mere pretext, which concealed the design of ascertaining the strength of the Douglas vassals, and organising the conspiracy which they were plotting against their own king. The result of the whole was the famous battle of Shrewsbury, in which the Percies, aided by Douglas, rose against their king. They suffered a disastrous defeat — Hotspur, the son, being slain, and Douglas wounded and taken prisoner.¹

¹ See a very picturesque account of this by Mrs Oliver, in her interesting book, 'The Gledstanes and the Siege of Coklaw.'

As bearing on our present narrative, the curious thing about the Percy movement is that the Earl, in his despatches to the king, speaks of the castle he laid siege to as Ormiston Castle. This was, doubtless, the name of a part of the Gledstanes' property; and it is said that the tower of Coklaw occupies a site in front of the comparatively modern Ormiston House. The ruins of Coklaw Castle remained until about the middle of last century. There can be no doubt that Gledstanes, of Gledstanes was also, especially latterly, Gledstanes of Coklaw. He is named indifferently as both in an indictment for slaughter, to be noticed subsequently. But the question is, Where was this Coklaw? Was it originally the Coklaw on Ormiston, or was it the Coklaw which adjoins Easter Gledstanes in the parish of Libberton? There is a hill so named—bounding with Easter Gledstanes—having on its northern slope a small property called Gledstanes Boreland. Was Coklaw then the property of the Gledstanes originally, and did they retain this after parting with the Gledstanes estate? This seems to me very probable. When they left Lanarkshire to reside in Teviotdale, they put up their tower on Ormiston; but they called the

tower Coklaw in memory of their original possession in Lanarkshire. Hence Percy naturally spoke of Ormiston Castle. The Gledstanes had but newly acquired it; and in process of time, through association with them, it came to be called Coklaw. Gledstanes of Gledstanes was also Gledstanes of Coklaw in the reign of Robert III. (1390-1406). Had Ormiston Castle been at that time Coklaw, Percy would have so designated it in 1403.

After the time of the siege of Coklaw we find various references to Gledstanes, chiefly signatures in public documents connected with Teviotdale. On March 22, 1564, John Gledstanes of that ilk is one of the subscribers to a contract of reconciliation and amity between the Scotts and the Kerrs after years of deadly feud; and Gledstanes appears as an adherent of Buccleuch. Still more curious than this, looked at in the light of modern times, is the circumstance suggested by the lines of old Scott of Satchells. He tells us:—

“The barons of Buccleuch they kept at their call
Four-and-twenty gentlemen in their hall;
All being of his name and kin,
Each two had a servant to wait on him.”


Of these “four-and-twenty gentlemen,” twenty-

three were Scotts, and the twenty-fourth was Walter Gledstanes of Whitelaw—a cadet of Gledstanes of that ilk—and “a near cousin of my lord.” His father or grandfather had married a Scott of Buccleuch.

The Gledstanes emerge again into public notice at the time of the Raid of the Reidswire. This conflict took place in a sudden and unlooked-for manner in the summer of 1575, on the southern slope of the Carter Fell, as one passes downwards to the Reed Water—a charming hillside, now full of soft green pastoral beauty and peace, with pathos enough to touch the sternest heart. It is a day of a Warden Court. The Scotch and English representatives are there, with their followers. They, and all who come to sue or to defend, are mounted and armed. Scotts, Elliotts, Armstrongs, Turnbulls, Rutherfurds—the keenest blood of the Borders—are there from the north side of the Cheviots.

“Then Teviotdale came to wi’ speed ;
The Shirrif brought the Douglas down,
Wi’ Cranstone, Gledstone, good at need,
Baith Rewle Water and Hawick Town.”

It is an eager, keen-eyed, and impassioned



assembly, and it needed but the first semblance of impatient word on the part of a leader to stir the string of every bow among his followers in the gathering. The Redesdale Borderers—who had probably first heard service in the church of Elsdon (Ellesdun), and ere leaving had sharpened, as was their wont, their arrows on the sandstone pillars of the house of God—were the first to yield to the impatient impulse. They sent a shower of arrows on the Scots; the challenge was promptly returned; and, amid the deafening slogans of the Border names, an impetuous onslaught was made on the men of Redesdale and Tynedale; and, stalwart foes as they were, after a stern conflict,—

“Then ower the knowe, without good night,
They fled, with mony a shout and yell.”

Sir John Heron, on the English side, was killed; and Sir John Carmichael, the Scottish warden, had to go and compose the matter of the irregular skirmish with the strong-minded Elizabeth, who rated him soundly for the whole business.

The Gledstanes held the Hundleshope estate, from the time of Margaret Turnbull, for more

than two hundred years. During the greater part of that period there seems to have been a chronic feud between the Gledstanes and the town council of the neighbouring burgh of Peebles. Among the large possessions of the burgh at that time was the hill, or rather "the four hillis," of Cademuir. This ridge lay directly to the north of Hundleshope, and the two estates marched with each other. Cademuir was a very ancient burghal property. The common pasture of Cademuir was confirmed to the burgh, as even then an ancient right, by James II. (1451-52). It was as old as the first infeftment of the burgh. Its "four hillis" are beautiful pasture land, except on the south side facing Hundleshope, which are craggy, and for the most part covered with "slidders," or screes. Cademuir was in the old times partly in natural pasture and partly under the plough. It was even famous for its oats, for the old local rhyme speaks of—

"Cademuir cakes, Bonnington Lakes,
Crookston, and the Wrae ;
Hungry, hungry Hundleshope,
And scawed Bell's Brae."

It was thus a tempting bit of land to be so near "hungry Hundleshope." This was more remarkable for the savage grandeur of its glens, and the dark russet of the heather through nine months of the year, than for its verdure or its oats. The Gledstanes had not been long in Hundleshope until they advanced a claim to at least some part of Cademuir. The succeeding years are mainly a record of their restless desire to get hold of the hill in part or in whole. Claims to a share in the common lands were preferred by John Gledstanes of that ilk, and Thomas Lowis of Menner; and these the king (March 26, 1482) appointed to be determined by an "inquisition," to be chosen by the next Justice Aire at Peebles. This Aire, sitting in the Tolbuih at Peebles, found, after inquiry (February 18, 1484-85), that "the communitie of the burgh of Peblis is in possession in propirte of the occupaccioun and sawing of the common of Cadismure, and common Strouthir, debatable betwit thame and Johne Gledstanes of that ilk and Thomas of Lowis of Menner." Notwithstanding this legal decision, John of Gledstanes of Coklaw still persists in letting out

to tenants parts of the lands of Cademuir. These tenants and he himself are again prosecuted before the Lords of Council (January 17, 1505-6), and they are prohibited from further interference with the common, the decision of the Justice Aire of 1484 being confirmed. As Gledstanes' tenants amounted to twenty, the portion of Cademuir he claimed must have been by no means inconsiderable. The rights of the burgh to the hill were again, for purpose of greater security, fully confirmed by charter of James IV. (July 24, 1506). Next year (January 2, 1506-7) appeared at Peebles most of those who had been Gledstanes' tenants, dwellers near the marches of Cademuir, and acknowledged their wrong-doing in occupying the lands, and declared they would in time coming cease to do so. But John of Gledstanes of Coklaw—for this he is named, as well as of that Ilk—was a persistent man. Twelve years after the first troubling of the burgh "in the brooking of their lands of Cademuir," he was at the business again. The Governor of Scotland was out of the country, and there was general insecurity. This was John's oppor-

tunity. Accordingly, on the Sunday before June 8, 1518, "the said Johne" sent his household men and servants, and "cruelly dang and hurt thair [the burgh's] hirdis and servants, that were kepand thair corne and gudis within thair said propir lands, and left twa of them liand on the field for deid, and houndit thair cattale furth of their awne grund." And what is worse, when in the afternoon of the same Sunday the Peebles folk came up to the hill to look after their wounded servants, John, "perseverand in his evill mynd, send furth Johne of Gledstanes his nevoy and apperand air, Archibald Gledstanes, his sone, and others to the number of twenty-six men," attacked and chased the burghers off their own ground. This feud of the Gledstanes with the burghers of Peebles continued for many years, and was marked by such atrocities as at length roused their peaceful neighbours to judicial action against them. In 1561 we find "John Gledstanes, of Coklaw, dilatit for the slaughter of umquhile Thomas Peblis and William Bell," before the Lords of Council. But nothing came of the business—either punishment for the crime, or compensa-

tion to the relatives of the murdered men; and the terror of the Gledstones lay so heavily upon the burgesses of Peebles that the lands of Cademuir were left waste and untilled for some years. The impotency of law and the power of the individual in these terrible times could not receive a stronger illustration than in such a fact as this.

Forty years afterwards the descendants of the murdered man are found still pursuing the family of the Gledstones for redress, but without success. The murder was not disputed, the simple question was as to compensation to relatives; and even of this they got nothing. The usual barren phrase was "sureties to satisfy parties for the slaughter of the said umquhile Thomas Peiblis." Such was the state of Scotland even after the union of the Crowns.


This desire for getting hold of Cademuir seems to have been hereditary with the Gledstones, to have continued after they had parted with Hundleshope, and to have extended even to the ladies of the family. For we find in 1620 (March 30) that the provost and bailies of the burgh of Peebles complain that on the 10th

inst. Beatrix Ker Lady Gladstones, William, Robert, and James, her sons, Robert Dickson in Hundleshope, Alexander Melrose there, and William Ker, plowman there, with about ten other persons, "all bodin in feir of weir"¹—the lady included—came to "the commontie of the burgh called Kaidmuir, whair some of the inhabitants were occupied in their lauchful affairs, upon their awin heritage, and thair threatened them with death gif they did not quit the ground." The defenders not appearing, are denounced rebels. This seems to have been the last attempt on Cademuir by any one of the name of Gledstones. It was reserved for a later time to see this old burgh possession swallowed up in the properties of neighbouring lairds. While it was held directly by the burgh, and only let out to tenants, it continued safe. But when the council embarked on the hazardous policy of giving rights of tenure and alienation to the burgesses, these proprietors readily became an easy prey in succession to the grasping neighbouring lairds; and now Cademuir, and the Strouthir, and Whitehaugh, and Eschiels,

¹ Equipped in war array.

and Glentress, and many other fair lands, have passed away for ever from the common good of the burgh.

Gledstanes of that ilk seems to have parted with his property in Lanarkshire shortly before Hundleshope passed to the Scots—a branch of the house of Thirlestane. There was, however, in the immediate neighbourhood of the original lands another estate, though a small one, which had belonged to the Gledstanes from an early period; this was Arthurshiel. It lies to the west of the Gledstanes, nearer to Tinto, and is divided from them by White Castle, an old historic estate. This property was held in succession by members of the family till towards the close of the eighteenth century, when the son of the last Gledstanes of Arthurshiel removed to the neighbouring town of Biggar, and commenced business there as a maltman, then a flourishing trade in the town. This was William Gledstanes. He died in 1728, and was interred in the old family burying-ground in Libberton churchyard—the last earthly link of the Gledstanes with the old race whence they had sprung.



John Gledstanes, the eldest son of William Gledstanes, and grandson of the last laird of Arthurshiel, was born about 1693. He succeeded his father in the business of maltman; and his name appears as a witness on a legal document of 1730 as "John Gladstones, maltman and burgess in Biggar." He was also keeper of the baron's giral, or storehouse of the rents in kind, paid by tenants to the Lords Fleming, now Earls of Wigton. He died in 1756, leaving five sons and six daughters. Of these Thomas, the fourth son, left Biggar, and settled in Leith as a corn merchant. His son John went to Liverpool, engaged in the West India trade, and acquired a large fortune. He purchased the estate of Fasque, and was created a baronet in 1846.¹ Thomas his son succeeded him. Once again, then, after many vicissitudes of fortune, the old name of Gledstanes, somewhat modified and clipped, but by no means improved, has taken its place among "landit men" — the greatest social distinction even in Radical Scotland. The brother of Sir Thomas,

¹ See Hunter's 'House of Biggar,' where certain of these facts are given.

and third son of Sir John, is William Ewart Gladstone, of whom it may be said, that besides doing all that the scholar does in the study, he is still foremost in energy among energetic statesmen, and unsurpassed, if indeed equalled, by any living orator in the marvellous spontaneity of noble thought and burning word.

It is but a few weeks ago since Mr Gladstone made a short visit to the Border country, passing along the line of railway from Edinburgh to Peebles. There he spoke a few words to an eager gathering. He said it was a fair land which he looked upon, and he added that the trampling on the political birthright of the people of the district, persistently done there, was not congruous with the natural beauty which he saw. He was probably not aware that the locality and surrounding scenes, though new to himself, were the familiar places of his forefathers. Within a mile of where he stood lay Winkston, Mailingsland, Acolmfield, his ancestral lands; and while addressing his audience his eye might have rested on the heights of

Hundleshope, the old Turnbull and Gledstanes hills. Had this occurred to him, a historic touch would certainly have lent a thrill of more than usual ardour even to his impassioned speech. Mr Gladstone vindicating citizen rights, and generally quickening the moral sense of the country by his persuasive appeals, is a marked contrast to the Gledstanes of the sixteenth century and their doings on Tweedside. But we cannot help thinking that the strong spirit of the old Borderer is in the modern type of the nineteenth century, only inspiring and sustaining a nobler purpose, and working by different and higher ways. The eminent statesman sometimes speaks of there being only Scottish blood in his veins; he may even say that he has the blood, in a long and continuous stream, of the old Scottish Borderer; and therein has always lain an intense fervour—perhaps the truest perfervid genius of the Scot—not unattended by a fine chivalry, a resolute independence, and a noble daring. This nature has never had much sense of compromise; it has been accustomed to straight aim and effort, to a grand self-re-

liance; and this joined, or rather subordinated, to a burning moral purpose, may explain the fervour—the attraction to some, and the repulsion to others—of the career of a great modern statesman.



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